

# Huskers Illustrated

NEWS PLEASE RUSH

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## Defensive Struggle

Also: A Look Ahead to 2007

Volleyball  
National  
Title Section  
on Flip Side



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# Huskers Illustrated

Huskers take third volleyball title

# CHAMPS!





# Fairy-Tale

*Long, winding road  
leads to storybook  
ending in Omaha*

**By Todd Henrichs**  
**Photos: Scott Bruhn**

**W**hat ended as the perfect fairy tale, with its fanciful storyline and noble characters, very nearly was written as a tragedy.

The same Nebraska volleyball team that celebrated a historic national championship won before a record crowd in Omaha went through a lot to get to the moment where sophomore Jordan Larson ripped a clinching kill and the happy Huskers clenched one another at the net after winning the program's third title.

The journey that began with heartbreak and shock in San Antonio, with Nebraska having been embarrassed by Washington in the national championship match a year earlier, that continued in Japan and China, that included a hot and heartbreaking summer and an at-times adverse autumn culminated close to home with perfect poignance.

Dani Mancuso, the home-grown senior from Omaha who only landed in the starting lineup after national player of the year Christina Houghtelling underwent agonizing season-ending surgery in June, wandered through the stands hugging anyone with a willing embrace.

"I couldn't ask for a better group to win this with," she said, counting her coaches, teammates and the crowd of 17,209 that shared in the moment.

Just a week earlier, it was again Mancuso who provided a memorable image of this most memorable of all Nebraska seasons. In an emptied O'Connell Center, site of the Gainesville Regional, Mancuso sat smiling and crying on the lap of her father, Mike.

Together, their dream of seeing Dani's career end in the first final four to be played in her hometown had come true, but not without some fretful moments. Needing only to defeat Minnesota to reach the final four, Nebraska dropped the first two games with play more depicting a

## On The Cover

The Nebraska volleyball team displays the championship trophy shortly after winning the title Dec. 16 in Omaha. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.



Nebraska's players begin the celebration after defeating Stanford 3-1.

team feeling the pressure than one thriving in it.

What exactly was said in the locker room before Nebraska stormed out to win games three, four and five remains a secret, but without a doubt, those 10 minutes were as productive as any within a program that prides itself on work-ethic, routine and preparation.

"Going into the locker room allowed us time to line up in a circle and look at each other," said junior Tracy Stalls, a co-captain alongside senior Dani Busboom and the



# e Ending



"... This team definitely maxed out everything that they had. With the pressure they had to deal with all season, and then to be able to play in front of 17,000 each night, is just an unbelievable experience. To follow that up with two Nebraska girls getting the last two kills on the night is a fairy-tale ending."

— Nebraska coach John Cook

"She was not happy," Cook said, "and she had a right not to be. But it's a team game, and we've got to do what gives us the best chance to win."

Mancuso knows all about that. A full-time starter by the end of her freshman year who played at an all-Big 12 level at times as a sophomore, Mancuso had been swept from the starting lineup by an influx of young talent over recent years.

What role she would play this year wasn't cemented until the pain in Houghtelling's shoulder became too much to bear. The surgery should alleviate that, but it couldn't lessen the helplessness that Houghtelling experienced in having to watch Nebraska fight through the ups and downs of a long season.

After preseason battles for playing time, Cook settled on a redshirt freshman setter in Rachel Holloway and a true freshman middle blocker in Kori Cooper, sending one-time regulars Maggie Griffin and Amanda Gates to the bench.

Chemistry could have tore down the Huskers, just as the pressure of trying to protect a season-long No. 1 ranking and the knowledge that 16,000 Husker fans already had plans to watch them in Omaha could have crushed them.

At times, Cook could sense trouble. When it became clear the Huskers weren't enjoying themselves, he called them together and said he would shoulder all the burden of getting the team to Omaha. Impressive victories followed as Texas and Missouri, but then questions resurfaced after Nebraska was stunned at Colorado.

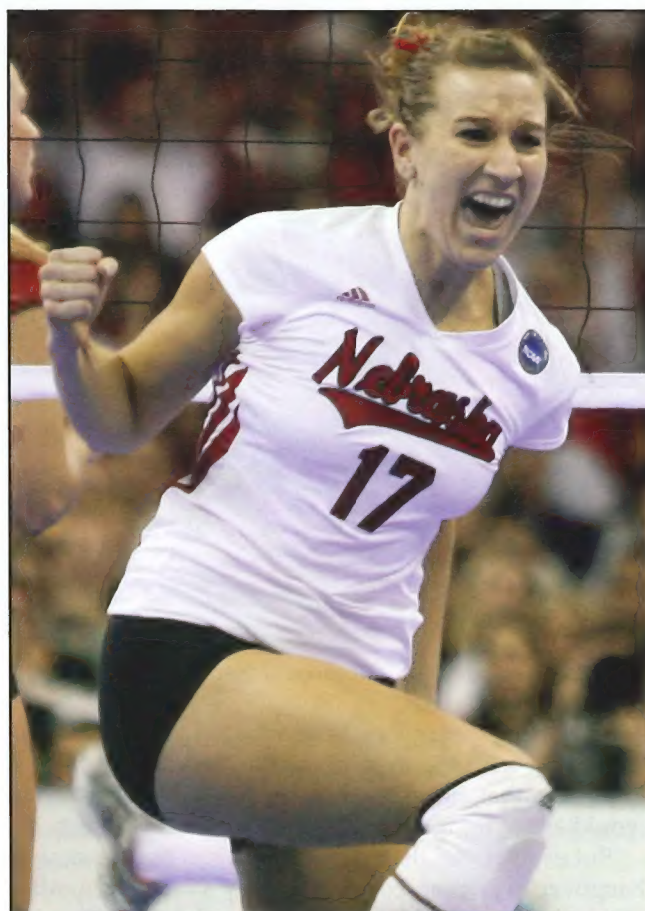
In volleyball, eventual national champions just don't lose to unranked opponents, even on the road. But what some feared was a warning sign instead proved to be not

injured Houghtelling. "Because when we do it together, nobody can stop us."

That theme began long before the season's first serve. It originated with the training trip to Japan and China, an excursion that head coach John Cook said beforehand would either bring the team together or tear it apart.

But even before that, the Huskers had to overcome the hangover of having been blasted by Washington with a national championship at stake. Some hard decisions followed, beginning with Cook asking Busboom to give up setting and become the team's libero.





Junior Sarah Pavan (9, top) and sophomore Jordan Larson (10, left) combined for 41 kills in the championship match. Sophomore Amanda Gates (17, above) celebrates after a kill.



much of a concern.

Nebraska rebounded to clinch the Big 12, rallied from the big deficit to defeat Minnesota and after defeating UCLA without playing its best, the Huskers put everything out there for its championship match with talented Stanford.

The Cardinal, six-time champions, captured game one, but it wasn't long before a feeling swept over the arena that this was the Huskers' night.

Sarah Pavan, one day after being named national player of the year, began to dominate and provided kills at the key moments. Larson shook all of her final-four struggles and had what could have been judged an MVP performance.

Even Gates, seldom used in the postseason, provided a spark as Nebraska came from down 27-24 to capture game three and set the tone for a fitting finish. The Huskers almost clinched the win on a serve from Rachel Schwartz, who drew plaudits from Cook for going for the ace.

The happy ending? Not quite. It came two points later when Larson swung down the line, and a state with

Aug. 29 San Diego W 3-0

#### Labor Day Tournament At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 1 St. Mary's W 3-0  
Sept. 2 Middle Tennessee St. W 3-0  
Sept. 3 Long Beach State W 3-0

#### Players Challenge At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 8 Louisville W 3-0  
Sept. 9 Cal Poly W 3-0  
Sept. 10 Minnesota W 3-1

Sept. 13 Kansas W 3-0  
Sept. 16 @Oklahoma W 3-0  
Sept. 20 Iowa State W 3-0  
Sept. 23 Texas Tech W 3-0  
Sept. 24 @Creighton W 3-1  
Sept. 30 @Baylor W 3-1  
Oct. 4 Kansas State W 3-0  
Oct. 7 @Texas A&M W 3-0  
Oct. 11 @Missouri W 3-0  
Oct. 14 Colorado W 3-0

burgeoning volleyball fever erupted in one chorus of cheers.

"You talk about the ultimate goal," Stalls said. "Our goal we kept talking about was to max out our potential.

"We did, and that's the best feeling, dealing with things that are totally out of our control and dealing with

Oct. 18 @Texas W 3-2  
Oct. 25 Missouri W 3-0  
Oct. 28 @Kansas State W 3-0  
Nov. 1 @Texas Tech W 3-0  
Nov. 4 Oklahoma W 3-0  
Nov. 8 @Iowa State W 3-1  
Nov. 11 @Colorado L 3-2  
Nov. 15 Texas A&M W 3-0  
Nov. 18 Baylor W 3-0  
Nov. 22 @Kansas W 3-0  
Nov. 25 Texas W 3-0

#### NCAA Tournament First/Second Rounds At NU Coliseum

Dec. 1 American W 3-1  
Dec. 2 Northern Iowa W 3-0

#### Regionals

#### At Gainesville, Fla.

Dec. 8 San Diego W 3-0  
Dec. 9 Minnesota W 3-2

#### Final Four

#### At Qwest Center (Omaha, Neb.)

Dec. 14 UCLA W 3-1  
Dec. 16 Stanford W 3-1

those things with our preparation, our effort, our attitude, and just how we relate with each other.

"Together, we did." ■

**Todd Henrichs** covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Lincoln Journal Star. He can be reached at 473-7439 or [thenrichs@journalstar.com](mailto:thenrichs@journalstar.com)



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Brooke Bartek Freshman  
Lincoln, Neb.



Dani Busboom Senior  
Cortland, Neb.



Kori Cooper Freshman  
Amarillo, Texas



Amanda Gates Sophomore  
Columbus, Neb.



Maggie Griffin Junior  
St. Charles, Ill.



Rachel Holloway Freshman  
Franklin, Tenn.



Christina Houghtelling Senior  
Cambridge, Neb.



Jordan Larson Sophomore  
Hooper, Neb.



Dani Mancuso Senior  
Omaha, Neb.



Sarah Pavan Junior  
Kitchener, Ontario



Rachel Schwartz Sophomore  
Lincoln, Neb.



Tracy Stalls Junior  
Denver, Colo.

**2006  
Huskers**



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Lee Maes  
Head Assistant Coach



Charlene Johnson-Tagaloe  
Assistant Coach



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## Promising Start, Disappointing Finish

*Narrow loss to quality opponent  
still knocks Huskers out of final rankings*



**Brian Hill**

recent final rankings came out, the Huskers were the second team listed among "others receiving votes" in both polls.

Not seeing Nebraska in the final rankings didn't come as a huge surprise. No team with five losses made either list. But you could argue that four of Nebraska's five losses were to teams rated in the top 10 at the time.

You also could reason that NU arguably outplayed the team that finished No. 8 — Auburn, the only team to defeat national champion Florida, which humbled previous No. 1 Ohio State 41-14 in the BCS National Championship Game. The Gators, who looked like world-beaters on Jan. 8, lost 27-17 at Auburn 12 weeks earlier.

Nebraska certainly had the opportunity for a 10th win, but a pass interception and a questionable fake punt that backfired gave the Tigers a short field for both their touchdowns in a 17-14 Cotton Bowl setback.

### ON THE COVER

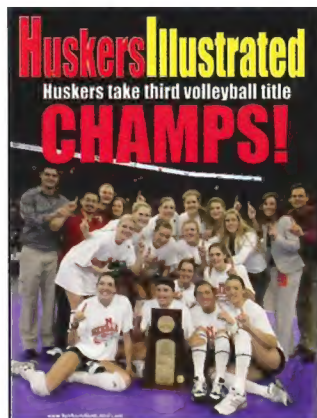
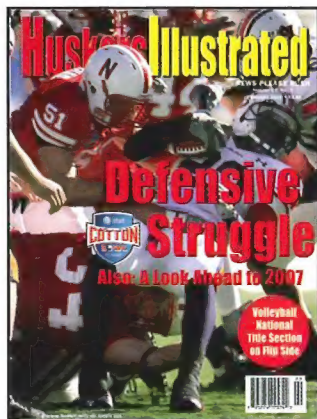
Nebraska linebackers Bo Ruud (top) and Stewart Bradley (bottom) combine to take down Auburn tailback Kenny Irons. The Huskers limited the Tigers to 67 yards rushing and 178 yards of total offense, but Auburn managed a 17-14 victory in the Jan. 1 Cotton Bowl.

Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

4 FEBRUARY 2007

You'll find much more about Nebraska's return to the New Year's Day bowl scene and a look ahead to 2007 in this edition of Huskers Illustrated.

You'll notice two covers displayed here. One features the Cotton Bowl, and the "flip side" leads off a special section devoted to NU's third national championship in volleyball. The Huskers went wire-to-wire as No. 1, but it certainly wasn't an easy road to the Qwest Center Omaha, where NU lost the first game to Stanford before winning three straight in front of a record crowd of 17,209.



Although there was concern that Husker fans might skip the Cotton Bowl after the disappointing loss in the Big 12 Championship Game, Nebraska was certainly well-represented in Dallas. The announced attendance of 66,777, including an estimated 25,000 NU fans.

They saw the Huskers impressively move the football on two long first-half drives and then watched the offense go dormant in the second half.

Maybe that shouldn't have been a surprise. The Huskers scored just 49 points in the third quarter all season. In its last 10 games, NU managed just two touchdowns in the third quarter and was shut

out in that period in all five losses.

That'll be one thing to look for next season — how the Huskers make half-time adjustments and how they adjust to the other team's adjustments.

Help will be on the way when another highly regarded recruiting class signs on Feb. 7. Six of those players were expected in Lincoln for the second semester and spring football. The annual Red-White Spring Game April 14 will give fans a preview of a team that will no doubt be in the preseason Top 25. ■

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# Huskers Illustrated

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Cornerback Andre Jones (above) and Nebraska's other returning starters know there are no guarantees as competition for playing time continues to increase through recruiting. *By Mike Babcock*

## NEXT ISSUE

The March 2007 Recruiting Edition is scheduled to mail Feb. 19. Check for updates at [huskersillustrated.com](http://huskersillustrated.com).

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## 4VB FAIRY-TALE ENDING

The Nebraska volleyball team that celebrated a historic national championship won before a record crowd in Omaha went through a lot to get to that magical moment. *By Todd Henrichs*



# 'A Great Time'

Nebraska's Cotton Bowl trip was a homecoming, of sorts, for sophomore I-back Marlon Lucky. Though he was a five-star recruit and Parade All-American at North Hollywood (Calif.) High School, he grew up in the tough Oak Cliff section of Dallas, Texas, about "10 or 15 minutes" from the Cotton Bowl stadium. He moved to Los Angeles at age 13, and lived with an uncle and guardian.

He remembers watching Prairie View A&M play Grambling at the Cotton Bowl stadium — Prairie View never won — and remains a Dallas Cowboys and Terrell Owens fan.

He's an Owens fan, he's quick to point out, because TO is "with Dallas."

Despite the neighborhood in which he lived with his mom, growing up in Dallas "was a great time," said Lucky. "I did every sport . . . a lot of sandlot football and basketball."

He played for the Oak Cliff Jets youth-league football team, outside linebacker. He was the "hardest hitter on the team," he said. He also was big for his age, even having to show a birth certificate.

"I really was," he said. "They wouldn't believe how old I was."

One season, the Jets were good enough to advance to the second round of the playoffs in Class B, at least the way he remembers it, but "then the ref cheated us," he said with a laugh.

He also played flanker for the Jets, and a little running back. But it wasn't until he moved to California that he emerged as a top running back. He rushed for 4,881 yards and 81 touchdowns in three seasons at North Hollywood High to attract recruiters, among them USC's.

Lucky never imagined he would one day get to play in the Cotton Bowl. Afterward, he told reporters that 17 relatives were in the stadium to watch him against Auburn.

Not counting Lucky, Nebraska's Cotton Bowl roster included nine Texans. Oh yes, and Matt Slauson, who grew up in Oregon and went to high school in Colorado, arrived in Dallas wearing cowboy boots and a cowboy hat. He got the boots for Christmas and bought the hat on the Alamo Bowl trip a year ago.

"I figured as long as I was here, I might as well fit in," he said.



Marlon Lucky had 88 yards rushing and 67 receiving in the Cotton Bowl.

season (3,197) and career (5,850), touchdowns in a season (26) and career (45), completions in a season (237) and career (470) and attempts in a season (430) and career (821). He also broke the school single-season record for total offense (3,291 yards) and ranks second on the all-time total offense list (5,791 yards), behind 2001 Heisman Trophy winner Eric Crouch (7,915).

Taylor's contribution to the development of coach Bill Callahan's program is well-documented. Now, he'll turn his attention to professional football. Callahan alluded to his chances of succeeding at the next level at a pre-Colorado news conference. "If he elects to go to pro ball, I can see him being a guy that can develop along the normal process and become an excellent player," said Callahan.

"Coming where he's come from and competing against the odds, he's done terrific in my eyes; he really has. And he'll only get better as he grows. I just love the guy."

Gil Brandt, former personnel director for the Dallas Cowboys and an NFL draft expert, told the Omaha World-Herald, "I like everything I see with this guy. I think he has some pluses going for him. The bottom line with him is he's a good decision-maker."

Taylor doesn't have a "great" arm, according to Brandt, but neither does New York Jets quarterback Chad Pennington. "Taylor has a good arm, and he really understands the offense," Brandt said.

## RIISING TO THE OCCASION

Defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove took more than his fair share of criticism this season, and especially after the Kansas and Oklahoma State games. Kansas gained 594 yards, Oklahoma State 496 yards. And the two teams scored a combined 81 points against the Blackshirts.

But no one could complain about Cosgrove's Cotton Bowl defensive game plan. Auburn managed only 178 total yards, and 14 of its 17 points followed Cornhusker mistakes deep in their

own territory. "So really, they got three points on us," defensive end Jay Moore said.

"Definitely, we played well. We played one of our best games, really."

Another in that category was the Big 12 championship game against Oklahoma. The Sooners managed only 42 yards rushing and their first touchdown was set up by a fumble deep in Nebraska territory. As with the Auburn game, Nebraska played well enough defensively to win.

In fact, Cosgrove's defense was at its best against the best opponents. The Cornhuskers were particularly effective in stopping the run.

USC, Texas, Oklahoma and Auburn, combined, averaged just 95 yards on the ground against Nebraska — and USC had the most success, rushing for 142 yards.



Senior linebacker Stewart Bradley leaves the field with defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove.

## TAYLOR'S TOTALS

Quarterback Zac Taylor finishes his Cornhusker career with most of the school passing records, among them yards in a



# QUICK HITS

## CONGDON LEAVES

Sophomore place-kicker Jordan Congdon withdrew from second-semester classes in order to return home to San Diego because of family issues, according to the Lincoln Journal Star. Evan Arapostathis, Congdon's kicking coach and a family friend, told the newspaper that Congdon could attend nearby Mesa College so he could be close to his family. "That's the bottom line," Arapostathis said.

Congdon, rated the nation's top kicking prospect out of San Diego's St. Augustine High School in 2005, earned Freshman All-America recognition last season, after setting a school record for field goals (19). His field goal accuracy (.826) was tops nationally among freshmen. This season he attempted only seven field goals, making five, and made 55-of-56 extra-point kicks.

Congdon's 40-yard field goal in gusting winds with 1:05 remaining gave the Cornhuskers a 27-25 victory against Kansas State set the stage for Nebraska's strong finish in 2005.

His career-long field goal at Nebraska was 41 yards. Late in the Cotton Bowl, coach Bill Callahan opted not to attempt what would have been a game-tying 47-yard field goal.

The Cornhuskers' travel roster for the Cotton Bowl included three other place-kickers, sophomore walk-on Jake Wesch, who handled most of the kickoffs this season, and freshmen walk-ons Alex Henery and Zach Egger. Adi Kunalic, a two-star recruit according to Rivals.com from Fort Worth, Texas, has orally committed to signing a letter of intent with Nebraska in February.



Jordan Congdon

## ALSO GOING ELSEWHERE

Quarterback Brian Hildebrand and cornerback/wide receiver Tyrell Spain have both left the football team. Hildebrand, who transferred from Mt. San Antonio (Calif.) College in August, walking on, told the Lincoln Journal Star he planned to transfer to an NCAA Division I-AA school, where he would have one season of eligibility after sitting out a season because the transfer would be his third.

He began his college career at Oregon State.

Hildebrand was fourth on the depth chart this season, behind Zac Taylor, Joe Ganz and Beau Davis. In addition, Sam Keller transferred to Nebraska from Arizona State soon after Hildebrand arrived, plus the Cornhuskers' 2007 recruiting class includes two quarterbacks, junior college transfer Zac Lee and Patrick Witt, both of whom were expected to enroll for second-semester classes.

Spain, a transfer from Mesa (Calif.) College who played in nine games on special teams this season, left the team prior to the Cotton Bowl trip. He was the 10th member of the 2005 recruiting class to depart, for various reasons. The others were Congdon, Harrison Beck, Leon Jackson, Dontrell Moore, Brock Pasteur, Rodney Picou, Robert Rands, Jeff Souder and Justin Tomerlin.

## JUST SHORT

Junior I-back Brandon Jackson was limited during bowl practices by a broken hand, suffered in the Big 12 championship game, and was used sparingly against Auburn. He carried only seven times for 38 yards, 20 of them on a touchdown run to tie the score at 14 in the second quarter.

Jackson needed 49 yards to reach 1,000 for the season, something that "means a lot to me," he said two weeks before the game. "But I'm not focused on that."

He'll have another shot next season, assuming he returns. He was looking into the possibility of declaring for the NFL draft, a decision that would have to be made by Jan. 15.

## FAN SUPPORT

Cotton Bowl tickets with a face value of \$90 reportedly were selling for as little as \$10 as the game approached. Even so, Nebraska was well-represented in Dallas. The announced attendance of 66,777 included an estimated 25,000 Cornhusker fans. Stadium capacity was 68,252.

## NATIONAL RESPECT

Coach Mike Anderson's baseball team, which is scheduled to open the season on Feb. 16 against New Mexico at the UTA



Tony Watson

Invitational in Arlington, Texas, was ranked No. 9 in Collegiate Baseball's pre-season poll and No. 17 in Baseball America's pre-season poll.

Pitcher Tony Watson and shortstop Ryan Wehrle were included on the Louisville Slugger pre-season All-America team, Watson second team, Wehrle third team.

Watson and Wehrle are among 22 lettermen returning from last season's team, which went 42-17 and advanced to NCAA regional play for the seventh time in the past eight seasons. Other All-Big 12 players in that group are Johnny Dorn, Andrew Brown, Jake Opitz and Andy Gerch.

## SEASON-OPENING SUCCESS

The No. 7-ranked Husker women's gymnastics team opened the season with a second-place finish at the Super Six Challenge in Fayetteville, Ark. Third-ranked Florida won the competition. Husker sophomore Kylie Stone was second in the all-around competition, with a score of 39.125.

The Huskers got off to a shaky start. They "could have easily packed it in and called it a day after the first rotation," coach Dan Kendig said. "But we climbed out of a hole."

Junior Emily Parsons, a seven-time All-American, finished second in the vault (9.975) and on the beam (9.85), while junior Desire' Sniatynski and sophomore Vanessa Meloche tied for third on the bars (9.925). Sophomore Tricia Woo finished third in floor exercise (9.825).

## DECEMBER GRADS

Nine members of the Cotton Bowl team, and three former football players, were among 31 current and former Cornhusker athletes who received degrees during the university's winter commencement in mid-December: Chase Anderson, Stewart Bradley, Chris Bryant, Adam Carriker, Ola Dagunduro, Matt Herian, Newt Lingenfelter, Shamus McKoy, Will Otto, J.B. Phillips, Brandon Rigoni, Zac Taylor.

**Baseball:** Brett Jensen. **Bowling:** Karla Engh. **Golf (men's):** Kent Schreiner. **Golf (women's):** Jackie Beste, Sara Sackett. **Gymnastics (men's):** Ray Hacker, Nick Moore. **Soccer:** Kari Hogan. **Swimming and diving:** Mackenzie Clark, Abby Fitzpatrick. **Tennis (women's):** Pamela Castillejos. **Track and field:** Sara Jane Baker, Chris Chandler, Priscilla Lopes, Dmitrijs Milkevics, Andy Nelson, Nic Peterson, Jason Thompson. **Volleyball:** Jen Saleaumua.

## GOING FOR TWO

Boise State finished the football season undefeated and earned national respect for the Western Athletic Conference by defeating Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl 43-42 in overtime. The Broncos had to make a dramatic comeback after building a 28-10 third-quarter lead then went for a two-point conversion and the victory in overtime. The conversion was a Statue of Liberty play.

Former Cornhusker coach Tom Osborne watched the finish on television and before Boise State coach Chris Peterson opted to go for two, he told the Lincoln Journal Star, he said to wife Nancy, "I hope they go for two."

Osborne elected to go for two and a victory against Miami with a national championship on the line in the 1984 Orange Bowl game. Had he settled for an extra-point kick and a tie, the Cornhuskers probably would have been voted national champions anyway. But he played to win.

## SWIMMING RECRUITS

Coach Pablo Morales announced a recruiting class of seven swimmers and one diver in late November. "It represents a great start to our recruiting efforts this year," he said.

Jess Andrews	Gillette, Wyo. (Campbell County)
*Mariesa Cloud	Maple Valley, Wash. (Tahoma)
Julie Giehl	Boulder, Colo. (Fairview)
Kelsey Grushecky	West Newton, Pa. (Yough)
Blaine Hoppenrath	Kansas City, Mo. (Liberty)
Brandie Kavalec	Loveland, Colo. (Mountain View)
Meredith Matthies	Wichita, Kan. (Kapaun Mount Carmel)
Rachel McClain	Henderson, Nev. (Coronado)
*diver ■	



## Emotional Ending

*Several Husker seniors have little time to reflect as they prepare for anticipated professional careers*



**Mike  
BABCOCK**

THE DIFFERENCE was dramatic. A little over a year before, Jay Moore had left the field at the Alamodome, eager to get back to the team hotel and party. He had an Alamo Bowl victory to celebrate, buoyed by optimism about prospects for the next season, his last at Nebraska.

This time, he had no victory to celebrate. As he left the field at the Cotton Bowl, all he had was the frustration of a loss that shouldn't have been and memories of a college career at an end.

He would be taking off his No. 44 Cornhusker jersey for the last time. And that realization "really hit me hard," he said. "Obviously, it would have been a lot different if we had won.

"But it was hard to keep back the tears."

Moore was among 19 Nebraska seniors who felt that way to varying degrees. None felt it more deeply considering he grew up in Nebraska, dreaming of playing for the Cornhuskers.

For a majority of the seniors, the Cotton Bowl game brought to an end their playing careers. Moore, however, was among a half-dozen expecting to be selected in the NFL Draft in April. As a result, he had little time to reflect on his time at Nebraska. That would have to wait.

He flew back to Lincoln with the team, packed up and headed to Omaha for a flight to New Jersey, where he began preparing for an anticipated professional career.

Between now and Feb. 21, when the NFL Scouting Combine begins at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis, Moore plans to spend most of his time training at the Parisi Speed School in Fair Lawn, N.J. Former Cornhusker Fabian Washington went there before the 2005 Combine.

Washington's experience at the training facility paid off. He tested well at the Combine, running the fastest 40-yard dash time (4.25 seconds) on the way to becoming a first-round pick.

He was the 23rd player selected, by the Oakland Raiders. Nebraska hadn't produced a first-round draft pick since 1998, when Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter were the sixth (St. Louis Rams) and 14th (Carolina Panthers) selections, respectively.

Moore also will spend time this month in Mobile, Ala., where he and teammate Adam Carriker, the Big 12 Defensive Lineman of the Year, will play in the Senior Bowl game on Jan. 27.

During a news conference in Dallas prior to the Cotton Bowl game, Cornhusker coach Bill Callahan said he had "no question" about Carriker's being a first-round draft pick.

"He has the size, the speed, the strength, the power that

you've got to have to play the base end position," said Callahan. "He's also got a lot of flexibility. Here's a guy who cannot only play the edge, but you can kick him down inside over the guard, and he can rush the passer from that position."

Moore, who also has a chance to be a high-round pick, "has tremendous speed, range and, of course, moves and counters of that nature that allow an athlete of his ability to come off the open-side edge where there is no tight end," Callahan said in Dallas. Moore's work at the Parisi Speed School and how he performs at the Senior Bowl will have a significant effect on where he's drafted.

Moore and Carriker are among a half-dozen Cornhuskers projected as draft picks. All except quarterback Zac Taylor are defensive players. Taylor, tight end Matt Herian and linebacker Stewart Bradley have been picked to play in the East-West Shrine game at Houston on Jan. 20.

Herian, once a certain high-round pick, is now considered a longshot to be drafted. Defensive linemen Ola Dagunduro and Barry Cryer are the other defensive draft possibilities with Bradley.

Nebraska hasn't had more than five players drafted since 2001, when seven were selected, headed by rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch and center Dominic Raiola, both in the second round.

In contrast, the Cornhuskers never had fewer than five players drafted from 1988 to 1998, including 10 first-round selections, evidence according to some of the drop-off in talent that factored into athletic director Steve Pederson's decision to replace Frank Solich following the 2003 season.

Bradley, who walked on at Nebraska, was less sentimental than Moore about his Cornhusker career coming to an end. "I'd like to get paid for my football," he said after the Cotton Bowl game.

Pushing a tear aside or not, Moore was ready to get paid, too. He was ready to move on, move to the next level, after two seasons of starting and five seasons of memories, not all pleasant.

It would have been easier with a victory, going out at 10-4 instead of 9-5.

"We've been so close, man, all year," said Moore.

Three days later, you could see him in a group photo on the Parisi Speed School Web site, smiling along with nine other just-finished college players from schools such as Florida State and Michigan State. The cutline said: "Now the 2007 Class is 10 members strong!" ■



**Defensive end Jay  
Moore had 45 tackles  
as a senior.**

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## 'You Can Feel It Bubbling'

*Road wins at USC and Texas indicate how far NU has come in four years*



**Curt McKEEVER**

THE BOB DEVANEY SPORTS CENTER looked familiar to Texas-Pan American women's basketball coach DeAnn Craft.

As for the opponent her team faced on Nov. 28? Well, let's just say these weren't same Huskers Craft remembered seeing four years earlier, when the Lady Broncs, 0-11 at the time, pulled off one of the biggest victories in school history.

Craft was the assistant head coach of that squad. And yes, she celebrated that outcome over a group steered by first-year coach Connie Yori. At the time, she had a hunch if Texas-Pan American ever returned to Lincoln, the circumstances would be more daunting.

Wonderful foresight on her part.

"Everybody knew when Connie took over that when she was able to put her touch to the program, and that takes time, (look out)," Craft said after Nebraska posted a 40-point victory in the rematch. "It's just been a matter of her being able to get in her own players, learn her system, play with the degree of intensity and intelligence that she demands."

"I think you're seeing, with their great win out at USC (on Nov. 26) to the way they manhandled us, they just played very fluid basketball. But that's Connie. She was a phenomenal player — played with both her mind and skills — and it's very apparent that this team emulates everything I think she probably teaches them on a day-to-day system."

The lopsidedness of the game, Craft added, "was indicative of how good they are."

That outcome left the Huskers with a six-game winning streak after they'd opened the season losing at 13th-ranked Arizona State. NU then cracked the top 25 only to not be able to hang on to a late four-point lead at home against Minnesota.

But Yori's team responded by winning its next seven.

Included in that stretch was the school's first tournament title away from home since 1995, and a Big 12 Conference-opening victory at Texas that snapped an 0-for-8 streak against the Longhorns.

And so it was hardly a surprise to Oklahoma coach Sherri Coale that her eighth-ranked Oklahoma club found itself needing to rally from eight points down in the second half to win a tight game in Lincoln on Jan. 6.

Indeed, a lot has changed for the Huskers since they lost to Texas-Pan American during that season of 2002-03.

"There's some fervor here," Coale said afterward. "You can feel it bubbling."

Yori made no secret of her feelings entering this season that "this is the year we can make something special happen."

For starters, she had two-time All-Big 12 guard Kiera

Hardy and forward Kelsey Griffin, a member of the Big 12 All Freshman Team last season, to build around. Add forward Jelena Spiric — the 2005 Big 12 Newcomer of the Year who missed last season with a knee injury, and whose return allowed senior Chelsea Aubry to move back to her natural low-post position — and savvy senior point guard Ashley Ford to the mix, and it's easy to understand Yori's thinking.

In addition, she also felt strong about the kind of contributions Nebraska would get from five freshmen — three of whom were 2,000-point scorers in high school, and another who was an All-American.

"What I think is the trademark of (Yori's) teams is toughness," Coale said. "They don't back away from anything."

You want examples?

In the win against Texas, the Huskers erased a 10-point second-half deficit with an 11-0 spurt.

Against North Carolina State, they recovered from having an 11-point first-half lead slip into a tie early in the second half to score 14 straight and pull away for a 20-point win that marked their first against an Atlantic Coast Conference opponent since 1995.

At Creighton, after letting a 10-point second-half lead evaporate into a six-point deficit, Nebraska ran off 10 unanswered points to pull out victory.

"I really like this team," said Yori, who is seeking her first trip to the NCAA Tournament at NU after guiding Creighton to two "Big Dances" in 10 seasons with the Bluejays. "I think we have the right mix of players in our program. The bottom line is, we've got really good character women in our program right now. I feel like character really counts."

Maybe that's why Yori labels her latest assembly of talent as the best-practicing bunch she's had at Nebraska. And for that, she heaps much credit on the leadership of her four seniors.

"We have really high goals this year," Griffin said. "People can say it, but they want to work hard to achieve them."

In other words, a return to the WNIT, where last season the Huskers made it to the third round, would not be received as a proper payoff.

"It's been fun playing," Griffin said, "just because people's attitudes this year we don't feel out of the game until the whistle's blown at the end."

Then, Griffin echoed a sentiment of Yori's that Texas-Pan American's Craft probably could feel from the Huskers the last time she saw them.

"I feel really good about this team." ■



**Connie Yori is in her fifth season as head coach at Nebraska.**

**Curt McKeever** is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at [cmckeever@journalstar.com](mailto:cmckeever@journalstar.com)



# Better No

*Returning starters know there are no guarantees as competition increases*

**By Mike Babcock**

**T**he team bus was running and ready to leave the Cotton Bowl stadium. Only Andre Jones remained in the interview tent, holding a "Cici's Pizza To Go" box and answering questions from a couple of reporters, stragglers from the media crush a few moments before.

"I hate it that we couldn't pull it off for those seniors," the junior cornerback said of Nebraska's 17-14 loss against Auburn. "You just have to roll with it, can't let it get to you."

That wasn't going to be easy, of course. "I felt like we were going to win," he said. And the final score made dealing with it even more difficult. Close losses are tougher for him.

"It hurts even more," he said. "Nobody's ever going to forget this."

In fact, the memory of Nebraska's fifth loss would drive him and the other returning players in the off-season conditioning program, in the weight room and during spring practice. He took it "as a stepping stone," he said. "We're going to come back. We'll be good next year."

"Better next year" was a recurrent post-game theme.

"The sky's the limit for this team," said senior defensive end Jay Moore.

"The guys will be resilient," senior strongside linebacker Stewart Bradley said.

Jones, among a dozen or so returning starters, certainly qualifies. Resiliency is essential to a defensive back, and he has been that. Though he started every game in his first season at Nebraska, after transferring from Fresno (Calif.) City College, he didn't wear a Blackshirt in bowl practices.

He lost the Blackshirt after the Big 12 championship game, not because of his play but rather because of responsibilities related to academics. And he vows that won't happen again.

As for regaining the Blackshirt in the fall, well, that's no guarantee for him or for any of the other returning defensive starters: Cortney Grixby, Corey McKeon, Tierre Green and Bo Ruud.

Competition will be the order of the day, as it has been in the past. The difference is the number of those who are seriously competing continues to increase through recruiting.

Whether incoming freshmen, junior college transfers, those who sat out last season as redshirts (forced or otherwise) or walk-ons, "if you can play, you can play," Jones said. "We've got some great guys coming back. And this is a great recruiting class coming in here."

Six members of the 2007 recruiting class (depending on how their scholarships are counted) enrolled for second-semester classes and will prac-



tice in the spring. They are junior college transfers Larry Asante (safety), Shukree Barfield (defensive tackle), Zac Lee (quarterback) and Armando Murillo (cornerback) and freshmen Marcus Mendoza (running back) and Patrick Witt (quarterback).

Lee was on crutches when classes began, because of a knee injury, but expects to be ready for spring practice, joining the competition to succeed two-year starter Zac Taylor.

In addition to Lee and Witt, the competition will include returning players Joe Ganz and Beau Davis as



# Next Year?



Cornerback Andre Jones (25) got his first sack in the Cotton Bowl, dropping Auburn quarterback Brandon Cox for a 12-yard loss. Jones finished second in tackles with 74 in his first season at Nebraska.

well as Sam Keller, the much-publicized transfer from Arizona State.

Keller would appear to be the front-runner. The coaches were "killing" him with reps during the early bowl practices, according to offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Jay Norvell.

"He's done an excellent job. He's grown. He's maturing," coach Bill Callahan said of Keller following the next-to-last practice in Lincoln before the team left for Dallas. "He just

seemed a little bit more at ease, more comfortable with the whole mechanics of the offense."

That was the final practice in which Keller could participate until spring. And he couldn't travel with the team to the Cotton Bowl because of NCAA rules regarding transfers.

By then, however, he apparently had shown why cornerbacks coach Phil Elmassian said earlier, at a Big Red Breakfast in Omaha, that he was "like having another coach on the

## RETURNING STARTERS

### OFFENSE

(2006 starts/Career starts)

#### Line

Brett Byford	13/13
Mike Huff	13/13
Chris Patrick	12/14
Matt Slauson	11/14
Andy Christensen	6/6
Lydon Murtha	3/6
Carl Nicks	2/2
Jacob Hickman	1/1

#### Tight end

J.B. Phillips	12/24
Josh Mueller	2/5
Hunter Teafatiller	2/2

#### Wide receiver

Terrence Nunn	9/27
Maurice Purify	5/5
Nate Swift	3/9
Todd Peterson	2/3
Frantz Hardy	0/3

#### I-back

Brandon Jackson	9/11
Marlon Lucky	6/6

### DEFENSE

#### Line

Ndamukong Suh	*1/1
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#### Linebacker

Corey McKeon	13/25
Bo Ruud	13/23
Lance Brandenburg	1/2
Steve Octavien	1/2
Clayton Sievers	**1/4
Phillip Dillard	0/1

#### Cornerback

Cortney Grixby	14/28
Andre Jones	13/13
Zack Bowman	0/5

#### Safety

Tierre Green	***14/24
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### KICKERS

#### Punter

Dan Titchener	14/14
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\*Started against Oklahoma in goal-line defense

\*\*Started three games at tight end in 2005

\*\*\*Started three games at I-back in 2004



field."

One new coach will be on the field in the spring, Buddy Wyatt, who replaced John Blake as defensive line coach and had an immediate impact during bowl preparations, according to Callahan.

Wyatt impressed Moore, who won't even be playing for him.

"I really respect the man," Moore said.

Wyatt will have a sizeable task. No starters return in the defensive front.

In contrast, all of the linebackers except Bradley return, plus sophomore Phillip Dillard will be back after suffering a season-ending knee injury in the opener against Louisiana Tech.

The secondary also gets a boost with the return of cornerback Zack Bowman, who was sidelined by a knee injury early in training camp after starting the final five games in 2005. He considered leaving for the NFL. "I'm so glad he came back," said Jones. "The secondary is definitely going to be strong."

Free safety Andrew Shanle, who led the team in interceptions, is the only loss, with freshmen Major Culbert, Rickey Thenarse and Corey Young all apparently ready to step up.

During the early bowl practices, those three got a lot of scrimmage time. "We really majored in looking at our 'back end' and where we improved ourselves," Callahan said.

Starters return at all but two positions on offense, quarterback and fullback, where J.B. Phillips, a returning starter at tight end, practiced some during bowl preparations.

The most experienced areas are wide receiver and the offensive line. They will be "the strength of our team coming back next year," said Callahan. "So we'll try to build upon that strength."

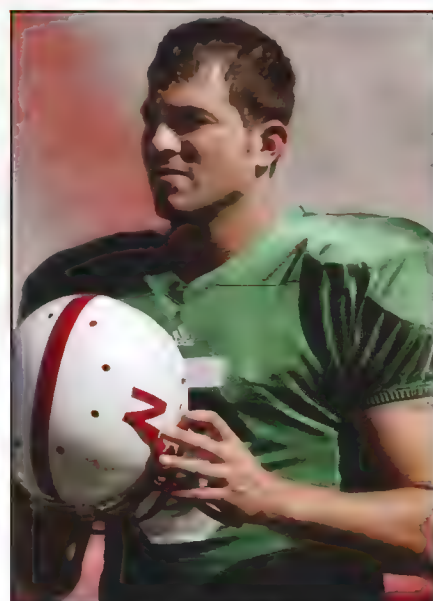
As with the secondary, a trio of freshman offensive linemen (who redshirted) will be pushing those ahead of them in the spring: Keith Williams, D.J. Jones and Cruz Barrett.

Everyone who caught a pass, except tight end Matt Herian (12-150-2) and fullback Dane Todd (3-13-1), returns, led by Terrence Nunn (42-597-3) and Maurice Purify (34-630-7).

The I-back committee returns in tact, providing that junior Brandon Jackson didn't opt to leave by way of

## 2007 SCHEDULE

Date	Team	06 rec.	Bowl (Opp.)	Result
April 14	Spring Game	12:30		
Sept. 1	Nevada	8-5	MPC Computers (Miami)	L 21-28
Sept. 8	@Wake Forest	11-3	Orange (Louisville)	L 24-13
Sept. 15	USC	11-2	Rose (Michigan)	W 32-18
Sept. 22	Ball State	5-7		
Sept. 29	Iowa State	4-8		
Oct. 6	@Missouri	8-5	Sun (Oregon State)	L 39-38
Oct. 13	Oklahoma State	7-6	Independence (Alabama)	W 34-31
Oct. 20	Texas A&M	9-4	Holiday (California)	L 45-10
Oct. 27	@Texas	10-3	Alamo (Iowa)	W 28-24
Nov. 3	@Kansas	6-6		
Nov. 10	Kansas State	7-6	Texas (Rutgers)	L 37-10
Nov. 23-24	@Colorado	2-10		



Cornerback Zack Bowman (left), who missed the 2006 season because of injury, and quarterback Sam Keller, a transfer from Arizona State, are among the pieces to the 2007 puzzle.

the NFL Draft, a possibility he was considering, according to the Lincoln Journal Star.

Jackson, the third-leading receiver (33-313-2), emerged as the head of the committee, which was ailing at the Cotton Bowl. He rushed for 989 yards and eight touchdowns.

The four — Jackson, Marlon Lucky, Cody Glenn and Kenny Wilson — rushed for a combined 2,422 yards, averaging 5 yards per carry, and 26 touchdowns.

Punter Dan Titchener returns, but sophomore place-kicker Jordan Congdon is gone, unexpectedly, transferring to Mesa College near home in San Diego, reportedly for personal reasons with the possibility he could return at some point. On the heels of Congdon's departure, place-kicker Daniel Lee transferred to Nebraska from Vanderbilt. He won't

be eligible until 2008, however.

Such is the nature of college football. Lineups change because of transfers as well as exhausted eligibility and injuries. Jones earned a Blackshirt after Bowman was sidelined and responded by finishing second on the team in tackles with 74 — behind Bradley's 76.

Jones also was tied for second on the team in pass break-ups, with seven, and he got his first sack in the Cotton Bowl, dropping Auburn quarterback Brandon Cox for a 12-yard loss.

The secondary was inconsistent this season, and "we definitely have room for improvement," Jones said as he headed to the waiting bus, with prodding from sports information director Keith Mann.

"But we're getting there," he added as he left the tent. ■



# Strong Finish

**Junior college, prep athletes join Nebraska's 2007 class**

**By Rick Shaw**

**D**uring the month of December and early January, Nebraska came close to closing out its 2007 recruiting class. Over the last four weeks of the year, 11 additional athletes pledged their commitments to the Cornhuskers.



Austin Stafford



Terrence Moore

It was also reported that one previously committed athlete, defensive back DeAndre West of Wilson Prep in Oakland, Calif., will now not be part of the class, bringing Nebraska's total number of known commitments to 30.

Out of the new commitments, four hail from Arizona (see Recruiting

Notes on Page 14). Safety/receiver Prince Amukamara, offensive linemen Jaivorio Burkes and Marcel Jones and defensive end William Yancy are all players from the Phoenix area who were lured to Lincoln by Nebraska assistant Bill Busch.

Two additional high school athletes joined the quartet of Arizona prep stars as December pledges.

Austin Stafford, a 6-foot-3, 210-pound outside linebacker out of Hayward, Calif., said yes to the Husker offer before the Holidays.

Rated the No. 42 prospect in California (three stars) by Rivals.com, Stafford chose the Huskers over offers from San Diego State and Utah, as well as heavy interest from Michigan, Michigan State and others. Possessing outstanding speed (4.5-second 40-

## NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2007

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Prince Amukamara	ATH	6-1	180	4.5	Glendale, Ariz. (Apollo)
*Larry Asante	DB	6-1	205	4.4	Alexandria, Va. (Coffeyville, Kan., CC)
*Shukree Barfield	DT	6-4	310	4.9	Camden, N.J. (Garden City, Kan., CC)
Anthony Blue	DB	5-10	172	4.57	Cedar Hill, Texas
Jaivorio Burkes	OL	6-4	311	5.78	Phoenix, Ariz. (Moon Valley)
Quentin Castille	RB	6-1	234	4.6	La Porte, Texas
Jared Crick	DE	6-6	245	4.8	Cozad, Neb.
Demetrious Davis	DT	6-2	286	5.22	St. Joseph, Mo. (Benton)
Kevin Dixon	DT	6-3	292	4.89	Sebring, Fla. (Garden City, Kan., CC)
Patrick Grant	DE	6-4	220	4.51	Lauderdale Lakes, Fla. (Boyd Anderson)
Eric Hagg	WR	6-1	192	4.52	Peoria, Ariz. (Ironwood)
Roy Helu	RB	5-11	206	4.62	Danville, Calif. (San Ramon Valley)
Ryan Hill	TE	6-3	230	4.7	Arvada, Colo. (West)
Marcel Jones	OL	6-7	310	5.3	Phoenix, Ariz. (Trevor Browne)
Adi Kunalic	K	6-0	175	4.67	Fort Worth, Texas (North Crowley)
Blake Lawrence	LB	6-2	199	4.65	Overland Park, Kan. (Shawnee Mission West)
*Zac Lee	QB	6-2	200	4.6	San Francisco, Calif. (St. Ignatius/City College)
Travis Lewis	LB	6-1	213	4.34	San Antonio, Texas (Lee)
Marcus Mendoza	RB	5-10	175	4.4	Houston, Texas (Spring Woods)
Terrence Moore	DT	6-3	267		New Orleans, La. (McDonogh 35)
*Armando Murillo	DB	6-0	195	4.4	Tampa, Fla. (Robinson/Eastern Arizona CC)
Niles Paul	WR	6-2	210	4.4	Omaha, Neb. (North)
Chris Perry	DT	6-3	319	5.1	Keller, Texas (Fossil Ridge)
David Ross	DB	6-0	174	4.5	Compton, Calif. (Dominguez)
Austin Stafford	LB	6-3	210	4.5	Hayward, Calif.
Shawn Sullivan	DB	5-11	182	4.4	Brenham, Texas
Joseph Townsend	DT	6-4	295	4.87	San Jose, Calif. (Valley Christian/Foothill College)
Latravis Washington	DB	6-3	210	4.55	Bradenton, Fla. (Bayshore)
Patrick Witt	QB	6-4	215	4.95	Wylie, Texas
William Yancy	DE	6-4	223	4.7	Glendale, Ariz. (Ironwood)

\*Junior college athletes who have signed letters of intent

For more daily recruiting information, visit [HuskersIllustrated.com](http://HuskersIllustrated.com), a member of the Rivals.com network.



## RECRUITING NOTES

# Nebraska Adds 4 from Arizona

By Sean Stevens

**A** rizona has always been a state where Nebraska has emphasized recruiting, especially in the metro Phoenix area. Past and current Huskers from the Phoenix area include Mike Brown, Richie Incognito, and Nick Covey, but there few recent recruiting classes have included more than one Arizona signee.

In the fall, athlete Eric Hagg of Peoria gave the Nebraska staff his oral commitment, triggering what has become a boon for the Huskers in the Grand Canyon State. Between Dec. 19 and Dec. 29, NU added four more Arizona oral commitments to give it five of the top 20 players in the state according to Rivals.com.

The first to join Hagg was his Ironwood High School teammate William Yancy, a 6-foot-4, 223-pound defensive end. Yancy had scholarship offers from schools like Oklahoma, Oregon, and Arizona State, and in the end, he chose the Huskers over Arizona and Purdue.

The Nebraska fans were a big part of his decision.

"The people in Nebraska are so personable, from the coaches to the players to the fans," Yancy said. "As an example, I was approached by some Nebraska fans in the airport who recognized me and talked to me about my season and stuff like that."

Next to commit was mammoth offensive tackle Marcel Jones of Phoenix (Trevor Browne). The 6-7, 310-pounder had offers from Arizona State and Oregon State but selected the Huskers based on how he felt after his official visit to Lincoln.

"It was a pretty good fit for me," he said. "I like the atmosphere. It was real nice. I liked how the town was around the campus. It was not a fast pace; it was slower. It had the small-town type of feeling. I will be able to focus more in that."

The day after Christmas, the Nebraska staff received a late gift with the pledge of offensive guard Jaivorio Burkes (6-4, 311). Rated by Rivals.com as one of the top 250 players nationally (4-stars), the Phoenix (Moon Valley) star picked the Huskers over Oklahoma and Michigan and 65-plus scholarship offers.

Before his announcement, he mentioned what he was looking for in a college.

"It's the place where I'll mostly feel comfortable and stuff. I'm also looking to see how fast I'll be able to play and how well I get along with the players and coaches," Burkes said.

The fifth piece to the Arizona puzzle was three-star athlete Prince Amukamara, a 6-1, 180-pound versatile speedster. Amukamara was all over the field. He rushed for 2,106 yards and 24 touchdowns, caught 22 passes for another 452 yards and six touchdowns and made 95 tackles and two interceptions as a cornerback on defense. For his efforts, he was named the Arizona Republic's 2006 Player of the Year.

Amukamara said that the other Arizona prospects played a part in his choice.

"Jaivorio and Eric are two of my best friends, and they're both headed there, and I know William and Marcel from playing basketball against them. All together I think there's five guys from here going up there, and that should make the move and transition a lot easier on each of us." ■



Jaivorio Burkes

yard dash) and quickness, the blue-chipper earned first-team all-league honors as a senior after racking up 10 sacks during the regular season and three more in the postseason.

"Austin has huge upside," Hayward head coach Casey Moreno said. "He's 6-foot-3 and 210-pounds, but he'll probably get up to 225-235 pounds easy. He has the frame that allows for that. He plays power forward for the basketball team. He has great hips and acceleration.

"He's quite a catch. When he achieved a qualifying test score, he really became a hot commodity. Michigan had great interest in him."

Terrence Moore, a 6-foot-3, 267-pound defensive tackle out of New Orleans (McDonogh 35), spurned offers from Georgia Tech, Missouri, Oklahoma State, Arizona and others by pledging to Nebraska. He earned first-team all-district and all-metro as a senior, tallying 81 tackles, including 31 tackles for loss and 14 sacks, and had eight pass deflections.

"It was the academics," Moore said when referring to the main reason he chose the Huskers. "I will be majoring in astronomy.

"My visit to Lincoln was great. All of the meetings they set up were the highlights. I just got to meet people directly with the program. Talking with them assured me that Nebraska is where I want to be."

And in somewhat of a surprise in early January, defensive tackle Chris Perry of Fossil Ridge High School in Keller, Texas, decided to become a Husker, after earlier committing to Miami.

"I like Nebraska a whole lot," Perry said. "It is real, real, real good, I like everybody there."

Perry (6-3, 319) is rated as the No. 22 recruit overall in the Rivals.com Texas top 100. He was named a first-team all-district defensive tackle, after a senior season when he led Fossil Ridge to a 10-2 record.

Four junior college standouts also made it known that they'd be attending Nebraska.

Larry Asante, a 6-1, 205-pound strong safety out of Coffeyville, Kan., Community College, picked the Huskers over offers from Arkansas, Clemson, Ole Miss, Texas A&M, Kansas State and others. Rated the No.



Chris Perry



9 junior college prospect (four stars) by Rivals.Com, Asante said he plans to come in and provide immediate help for the Nebraska defense.

"Nebraska was one of the first teams that came after me, and that meant a lot to me," Asante said. "They expect me to be a great fit in their system and scheme. The coaches were also great, and I can't wait to get up there to Lincoln to be part of the spring drills and make a big impact."

Asante, who runs the 40-yard dash in 4.4 seconds, led Coffeyville in tackles in 2006. He compiled 76 total tackles, including 11 tackles for loss, and had three blocked kicks and one interception. Coffeyville assistant Rico Cherico called Asante one of the best linebackers he's been around.

"To me, there isn't a better linebacker in the conference and maybe the nation," Cherico said. "Shoot, this kid is the real deal."

Asante enrolled at Nebraska for the spring semester, along with another



Larry Asante

er recent commitment from the Kansas junior college ranks, defensive tackle Shukree Barfield (6-4, 310) of Garden City Community College. Barfield, rated the No. 36 junior college prospect, said the opportunity to play football for Nebraska coach Bill Callahan was too good to pass up.

"I enjoyed myself a whole lot more than at any of the other schools," Barfield said. "They treated me with respect. Their coach is pretty much a legend, and I want to be coached by somebody like that."

Barfield originally signed with Rutgers out of high school, and he chose the Huskers over the Scarlet Knights as well as offers from Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisville and South Florida. Despite being frequently double-teamed in 2006, the stand-out defensive tackle tallied 41 tackles, eight tackles for loss and six sacks.

Nebraska got an added bonus when Kevin Dixon (6-3, 292), who lined up next to Barfield at Garden City, decided in early January to join his teammate in Lincoln.

That gave NU three junior college defensive linemen in its class, as the Garden City teammates joined Joseph Townsend, a 6-4, 290-pound recruit from Foothill College in Los Altos

Hills, Calif. Rated the No. 29 junior college prospect (four stars), Townsend chose the Huskers over offers from Arizona State, Mississippi State and Washington State.

Townsend is the younger brother of former Husker defensive tackle Larry Townsend Jr., who lettered in 1994-1995. The younger Townsend earned first-team all-conference honors for Foothill in 2006.

"I'm glad I got this college decision out of the way so that I can concentrate on my schoolwork," Townsend said. "I was supposed to go to UCLA in a couple of weeks, but with the NFL opportunity and the 94 percent graduation rate at Nebraska and all of the academic all-Americans . . . I was sold on the Cornhuskers."

Wide receiver Wallace Franklin of Butler County Community College in El Dorado, Kan., originally a member of Nebraska's 2005 recruiting class, committed again in December, but those plans apparently hit a snag. "He had some academic troubles at the end of semester, so he won't be going to Nebraska now," Butler Coach Troy Morrell told huskersillustrated.com. ■

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# Auburn 17

## Nebraska 14



Nebraska quarterback Zac Taylor is pressured by Auburn defensive end Quentin Groves. In his last game as a Husker, Taylor completed 14-of-26 for 126 yards and one touchdown. He was sacked twice. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)



# Near Miss

***Early gamble put Huskers 'behind the eight ball'***

***By Mike Babcock  
Photos: Scott Bruhn***

**P**unt? What punt? There was a pause . . .  
"Oh, the fake punt," Nebraska coach Bill Callahan said.  
Callahan was fielding questions in a large tent outside the stadium, following the No. 22 Cornhuskers' 17-14 loss against No. 10 Auburn in the Cotton Bowl game on New Year's Day.

The subject of the second question was a fake punt early in the second quarter.

"It was my call," said Callahan. "It didn't work, obviously."

The score was tied at seven when Callahan made the call, with Nebraska facing fourth down and 1 at its own 29-yard line. Punter Dan Titchener lined up as usual, but the ball was snapped to fullback Dane Todd, the up-back, who attempted to pitch to safety Andrew Shanle on a reverse.

The pitch went awry, however, and Auburn's Tristan Davis recovered at the Nebraska 14-yard line. "Things got discom-bobulated," Callahan said. "We got behind the eight ball on the short field."

Four plays later, Tigers fullback Carl Stewart scored from 1 yard out for the lead.

The closer to mid-field, the more likely Auburn would "go safe block," said Todd, "especially with our record of running trick plays. So we knew we had to do it somewhere deep in our own end."

The Cornhuskers ran several trick plays this season, among them a fake field-goal attempt on which holder Jake Wesch threw a 17-yard touchdown pass to tight end Hunter Teafatiller against Kansas State, a 25-yard touchdown pass from I-back Marlon Lucky to wide receiver Nate Swift against Texas, a 28-yard touchdown pass from wide receiver Maurice Purify to wide receiver Terrence Nunn against Missouri and a



Nebraska safety Andrew Shanle breaks up a long pass intended for Auburn wide receiver Courtney Taylor.

## **COTTON BOWL**

29-yard touchdown pass from back-up quarterback Joey Ganz to back-up defensive end Barry Turner on a fake field goal against Colorado. Clearly, Callahan never hesitated to dip into his bag of tricks.

"It's a gamble, and we ended up losing on that deal," Todd said. "It happens."

Even so, coming when it did, "it was still early enough in the ball game that if it didn't work and if it faltered, we were still in a good position, we felt, to come back," said Callahan.

The Cornhuskers did come back to tie the score at 14 with 9 minutes remaining in the first half. But they wouldn't score again, against a speedy Auburn defense that limited them to 230 yards.





Nebraska's defense was even more impressive, shutting down the Tigers — with two notable exceptions. Auburn put together a 10-play, 55-yard drive to a field goal midway through the third quarter and then mounted a 13-play, 64-yard drive that carried into the fourth quarter.

Though the Tigers were forced to punt, the latter drive, which began at their own 1-yard line, took them out of harm's way and killed 5 minutes and 25 seconds on the clock.

The first question asked of Callahan afterward related to another attempt to convert on fourth down, this time from the Auburn 30-yard line with less than 2 minutes remaining in the game.

The Cornhuskers needed 11 yards for a first down, and instead of having Jordan Congdon attempt a 47-yard field goal for a tie, Callahan opted to go for the first down.

Zac Taylor's pass sailed over wide receiver Frantz Hardy's head. "That was a throw I think I can make," Taylor said. "I just didn't get it to him in that critical situation."

## REPORT CARD

### RUSHING OFFENSE

The Cornhuskers were limited to 104 yards rushing, well below their average going into the game (175.62). More importantly, their per-carry average (2.7), wasn't sufficient to get the job done, although the average was distorted to a degree by 22 yards in losses, including 15 on the ill-fated fake punt. ★★ ★

### PASSING OFFENSE

Auburn played more zone coverage than expected and kept the Cornhuskers from getting the ball down the field. The Tigers played "mostly basic defenses," said coach Tommy Tuberville. "We didn't blitz a whole lot . . . not a whole lot, just defended. They were trying to get us in a blitz and get us messed up on the changing formations, and we weren't going to allow them to get the big play." ★★ ★

### RUSHING DEFENSE

Nebraska accomplished its plan of stopping the run. The Tigers were "a running team. They like to run the ball," defensive end Adam Carriker said. "We knew they were going to do that. We were going to try to make them throw the ball a little bit, and for the most part, we were pretty successful." The Blackshirts were more than "pretty successful." Auburn managed a net of 67 yards on the ground and more to the point, didn't reach 100 even discounting sack yardage. ★★ ★★ ★

### PASSING DEFENSE

Tigers wide receiver Courtney Taylor was chosen as the game's outstanding offensive player, with seven catches for 70 yards. But quarterback Brandon Cox was sacked five times and completed only 10-of-21 passes with one touchdown. Nebraska's pass defense was definitely good enough to win. ★★ ★★ ★

### SPECIAL TEAMS

Jordan Congdon's pooch punt late in the third quarter forced the Tigers to begin a drive at their own 1-yard line, and Dan Titchener averaged 41.6 yards on five punts, two of them inside the Auburn 20-yard line. On the down side, Auburn's Tristan Davis returned the second-half kickoff 43 yards for good field position (on which the Tigers couldn't capitalize), and the second-quarter fake punt went awry. ★★ ★

## NUMBERS

# 10

Auburn went into the game ranked No. 10 nationally, providing an opportunity for Nebraska to defeat a Top-10 opponent for the first time since the 2001 season, when the No. 3-ranked Cornhuskers defeated No. 2-ranked Oklahoma 20-10 in Lincoln. NU now has lost seven consecutive games against Top-10 teams. The last time the Cornhuskers were in the Top 10 was mid-September of 2002. They went to Penn State with a No. 8 ranking that week.



# NEBRASKA-AUBURN NOTES

## TALK IS CHEAP

During an interview on the Friday before the game, Auburn tailback Kenny Irons said Nebraska hadn't seen a running game like the Tigers had. The statistics certainly didn't reflect it. Auburn was limited to a net of 67 rushing yards. Irons gained 72 on 24 carries, an average of 3 yards per carry. "Kenny Irons had a big mouth," said Nebraska defensive end Jay Moore. "He didn't do anything."

The Cornhuskers "pounded him pretty good today," coach Bill Callahan said.

"I thought we were real consistent, efficient, productive in our run defense, and that's a good sign. Any time that you can take a team like Auburn, who is one of the best rushing teams in the entire country, and shut them down consistently, forcing them into passing situations, that's a credit to Coach (Kevin) Cosgrove (the defensive coordinator) and the Blackshirt defense."

Auburn's 178 yards of total offense were its second fewest of the season. The Tigers gained only 171 yards in a 37-15 loss against Georgia in mid-November.

## SPEED KILLS

Nebraska's offense didn't fare much better, gaining 230 yards, including 80 on its game-opening touchdown drive and 72 on its second touchdown drive in the second quarter.

After the second touchdown, to tie the score at 14 with 9 minutes remaining in the first half, the Cornhuskers gained only 74 yards and picked up five first downs.

Speed was a key to Auburn's success. "I thought of all the teams we played this year that was the fastest defense, with the most speed, we have seen," said Callahan. "They've got speed. They play fast, with pretty good players."

## THIRD-DOWN WOES

The Cornhuskers converted on four consecutive third downs on their opening touchdown drive but didn't convert on another third down until late in the game, on the possession set up by Stewart Bradley's team-high fourth fumble recovery of the season. They finished 5-of-14 on third-down conversions.

"I thought that was the key," Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville said. "We played good third-down defense the second half and were able to get them off the field and our offense back on."

## MORE ZONE

Based on what it saw on film, Nebraska expected man-to-man coverage in the secondary. "We thought they were going to throw us a lot of man," said wide receiver Maurice Purify, who caught only one pass. "In the SEC, they played everybody man-up, so we didn't think they would change on us."

The Cornhuskers didn't do anything unexpected on offense, according to Auburn defensive coordinator Will Muschamp. "Everything was something we had prepared for," he said. "Obviously, there were some man-beaters because we play a lot of man-to-man. We played a little more zone than I'm used to play, but that is kind of what the game dictated. That's what I felt we needed to do."

As a result, "our (offensive) game plan was a little off," Purify said.

The Tigers' pass rush also was a concern. "We tried to slow them down and keep them honest with the run and pass so they couldn't pin their ears back and just rush the quarterback," he said.

## SHORT FIELD

Auburn's touchdowns, both in the first half, were set up by Cornhusker mistakes, which provided short-field situations. The Tiger "drives" were of 9 and 14 yards. "We definitely outplayed them the first half," strongside linebacker Stewart Bradley said, noting that though the score was tied at the half, it was among the "funnest" games he had played in as a Cornhusker to that point.

"We felt like we outplayed them (in the first half) even though the score was tied, but that's football," said defensive end Adam Carriker, like Bradley a senior.

Carriker was credited with a 9-yard sack in the first quarter, his team-high seventh of the season. He finished his career with 20.5 sacks, sixth on the Cornhuskers' all-time list. "You've just got to play as hard as you can on every play, and that's what we did," he said.

The defense "did what they had to do to win the game," said quarterback Zac Taylor, the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year. "The offense just didn't step up."

## HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

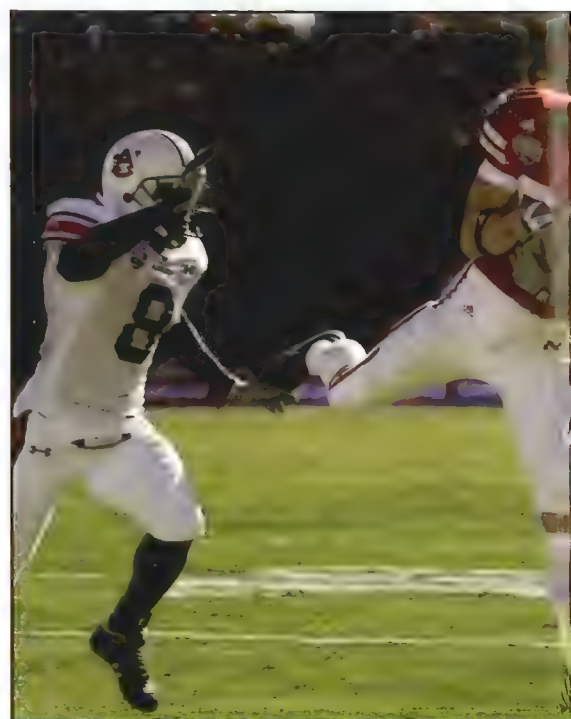
Callahan allowed players who could get there to spend Christmas at home, requiring them to be in Dallas the afternoon of the day after Christmas. As a result, the team charter from Lincoln carried only about half of the players, with the rest traveling on their own.

Junior Carl Nicks, who started the Colorado and Oklahoma games at offensive right tackle, didn't start against Auburn for disciplinary reasons related to a trip home. He missed the final practice in Lincoln in order to go home to Salinas, Calif. — he couldn't change his flight.

Lydon Murtha moved from left tackle to start in place of Nicks. ■



Linebacker Stewart Bradley's fumble recovery (above) put Nebraska in a position to win. Early on, the offense rolled, driving 80 yards, capped by a touchdown pass to tight end Mike Anderson.







at NU in business at the Auburn 42 with 5:24 remaining, but the Huskers couldn't cap-  
ed by Zac Taylor's 13-yard scoring pass to wide receiver Nate Swift (below).



A 47-yard field goal attempt would have been beyond Congdon's range, according to Callahan. "We come out in the pre-game and we check the distances with and against the wind and the cutoffs and decide where we feel we can make it and not make it. It was beyond our cutoff point," he said.

Congdon is 24-of-30 on field goal attempts at Nebraska, but his longest has been 41 yards. The sophomore from San Diego, Calif., was 5-of-7 this season.

"He knew exactly what the cutoff was and the staff knew," said Callahan. "Everybody was on the same page, and that's a decision that we live with as we went into that decision."

He wouldn't say what Congdon's cutoff point was. According to offensive coordinator Jay Norvell, the Cornhuskers needed about 5 more yards to be within Congdon's range.

Auburn's John Vaughn kicked the game-winner from 42 yards in the same direction. The "wind was blowing a little bit harder than what you would think if you weren't down there, and we had trouble kicking into that direction also," Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville said. "They went for the win.

"This is a bowl game; you come here to win the game." ■

## Who STOOD OUT?

### OFFENSE

I-back Marlon Lucky accounted for a majority of Nebraska's yards, rushing for a game-high 88 and catching six passes for 67. His six receptions tied the Cornhusker bowl record,



Marlon Lucky

previously shared by Bobby Thomas (1975 Fiesta Bowl), Dennis Richnafsky (1967 Sugar Bowl) and Tom Penny (1967 Sugar Bowl). "Marlon has been the workhorse," Callahan said, referring to bowl practices. "He did a great job. He's a fine player. He'll only get better. He's only a sophomore, hasn't redshirted yet, but he continues to grow and made a lot of good plays today on the field."

### DEFENSE

Strongside linebacker Stewart Bradley finished his college career in style, with seven tackles and the play that gave the



Stewart Bradley

Cornhuskers a shot at a tie with 5:24 remaining. He sacked Auburn quarterback Brandon Cox for a 6-yard loss, forced a fumble and recovered at the Tigers' 42-yard line. He blitzed on the play, rushing "like a lineman from a backer position," he said. "We had not done that all game. The back flared out and left me open on the edge, and he (Cox) didn't get the ball off in time, I guess."

## INJURY REPORT

Nebraska went into the game at full strength, sort of. Everyone was available anyway. The I-back committee was less than full-speed, with Marlon Lucky, who was hampered by back spasms late in the season, the healthiest of the four. Brandon Jackson (hand), Cody Glenn (foot) and Kenny Wilson (knee) all were limited in bowl practices, leaving Lucky to carry the load. The situation was such that freshman safety Major Culbert practiced at I-back, along with Thomas Lawson and fullback Dane Todd, who got a few carries, "just to get reps for legs," coach Bill Callahan said. Offensive lineman Matt Slauson, hobbled by a high-ankle sprain suffered against Texas A&M, suffered a knee injury during bowl practices but was able to play, rotating at right guard, where he moved from tackle.



# GAME STATS

## SCORING

Jan. 1, 2007  
Cotton Bowl Dallas, Texas  
Attendance 66,777

	1	2	3	4	F
Auburn	7	7	3	0	17
Nebraska	7	7	0	0	14

### First Quarter

	AU	NU
NU Swift Pass from Taylor 13-yards (Congdon Kick) 07:37	0	7
<b>Drive:</b> 15 plays 80 yds 7:23		
AU Stewart Pass from Cox 9-yards (Vaughn Kick) 00:56	7	7
<b>Drive:</b> 2 plays 9 yds 0:59		

### Second Quarter

	AU	NU
AU Stewart 1-yard Run (Vaughn Kick) 12:22	14	7
<b>Drive:</b> 4 plays 14 yds 1:48		
NU Jackson 20-yard Run (Congdon Kick) 09:00	14	14
<b>Drive:</b> 7 plays 72 yds 3:22		

### Third Quarter

	AU	NU
AU Vaughn 42-yard Field Goal 06:20	17	14
<b>Drive:</b> 10 plays 55 yds 2:53		

## TEAM STATS

	AU	NU
<b>Total First Downs</b>	12	17
Rushing	5	6
Passing	6	8
Penalty	1	3
<b>Rushing Attempts</b>	35	38
<b>Yards Gained Rushing</b>	111	139
<b>Yards Lost Rushing</b>	44	35
<b>Net Yards Rushing</b>	67	104
<b>Net Yards Passing</b>	111	126
Passes Attempted	21	27
Passes Completed	10	14
Had Intercepted	0	1
Percent Completion	47.6%	51.9%
Yards per Attempt	5.3	4.7
Yards per Completion	11.1	9.0
<b>Total Offensive Plays</b>	56	65
<b>Total Net Yards</b>	178	230
Avg. Gain Per Play	3.2	3.5
<b>Fumbles: No-Lost</b>	2-2	1-1
<b>Penalties: No-Yards</b>	6-45	4-45
<b>Punts: No-Yards</b>	6-258	6-241
Avg. Per Punt	43.0	40.2
Avg. Net Punt	39.2	39.7
<b>Punt Returns: No-Yards</b>	3-3	1-23
<b>Kickoff Returns: No-Yards</b>	2-58	2-40
<b>Interception Returns: No-Yds</b>	1-52	0-0
<b>Fumble Returns: No-Yards</b>	0-0	0-0
<b>Miscellaneous Yards</b>	0	0
<b>Possession Time</b>	27:00	33:00
<b>Third-Down Conversions</b>	4-12	5-14
Percentage	33.3%	35.7%
<b>Fourth-Down Conversions</b>	0-0	0-2
Percentage	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Sacks By: No-Yards</b>	2-9	5-32

## PLAY CHART

(No. of Plays)

Yards	NU	AU
(-) Yards	13	8
0-5 Yards	33	32
6-9 Yards	9	8
10-19 Yards	7	6
20-29 Yards	3	2
30-39 Yards	0	0
40-49 Yards	0	0
50 or more Yards	0	0

22 FEBRUARY 2007



Junior I-back Brandon Jackson, limited by a broken hand during bowl preparations, goes 20 yards for a touchdown on the second of his seven carries.

## INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

### AUBURN

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
K. Irons	24	80	8	72	3.0	0	14
Tate	4	27	4	23	5.8	0	21
Taylor	1	3	0	3	3.0	0	3
Stewart	1	1	0	1	1.0	1	1
Cox	5	0	32	-32	-6.4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Cox	21	10	47.6	0	111	1	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Taylor	6	70	0	21
Rodriguez	1	18	0	18
McKenzie	1	12	0	12
Stewart	1	9	1	9
K. Irons	1	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Smith	3	3	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Davis	1	43	0	43
Lee	1	15	0	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Bliss	6	43.0	57	0	1	0	2	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	

	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Vaughn	1	1	42	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Herring	7	0	7	2-4	0-0	0	0	0
Thompson	5	1	6	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Savage	4	1	5	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Brock	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Marks	3	2	5	2-3	0-0	0	0	0
Browder	3	1	4	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Coleman	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
D. Irons	1	2	3	1-4	0-0	1	0	0
Dede	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Johnson	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Sims	3	0	3	1-8	1-8	1	0	0
Trahan	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Gunn	1	1	2	1-2	1-1	0	0	0
Lee	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Powers	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Gandy	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Davis	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Dede	1	52	0	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>

### NEBRASKA

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Lucky	25	96	8	88	3.5	0	10
Jackson	7	39	1	38	5.4	1	20
Nunn	1	0	2	-2	-2.0	0	0
Taylor	4	4	9	-5	-1.2	0	4
Todd	1	0	15	-15	-15.0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Taylor	26	14	53.8	1	126	1	24
TEAM	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Lucky	6	67	0	19
Swift	3	44	1	24
Purify	1	9	0	9
Nunn	1	8	0	8
Todd	1	4	0	4
Jackson	2	-6	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Grixby	1	23	0	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Lucky	2	40	0	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener	5	41.6	53	0	1	1	1	1	2
Congdon	1	33.0	33	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Bradley	4	3	7	1-6	1-6	0	1	1
Moore	4	2	6	1-4	1-4	0	0	0
Dagunduro	2	3	5	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Jones	5	0	5	1-12	1-12	0	0	0
McKeon	3	2	5	1-3	0-0	0	1	0
Carriker	3	1	4	1-9	1-9	0	0	0
Green	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Grixby	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Octavien	3	0	3	1-1	1-1	0	0	0
Ruud	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	1
Brandenburg	1	2	3	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Cryer	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Kadavy	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Shanle	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Culbert	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Swift	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Turner	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0



# 2006 RESULTS

1 Sept. 2	Louisiana Tech (3-9), W 49-10	1-0
2 Sept. 9	Nicholls State (4-7), W 56-7	2-0
3 Sept. 16	@USC (11-2), L 28-10	2-1
4 Sept. 23	Troy (8-5), W 56-0	3-1
5 Sept. 30	Kansas (6-6), W 39-32 (OT)	4-1
6 Oct. 7	@Iowa State (4-8), W 28-14	5-1
7 Oct. 14	@Kansas State (7-6), W 21-3	6-1
8 Oct. 21	Texas (10-3), L 22-20	6-2
9 Oct. 28	@Oklahoma State (7-6), L 41-29	6-3
10 Nov. 4	Missouri (8-5), W 34-20	7-3
11 Nov. 11	@Texas A&M (9-4), W 28-27	8-3
12 Nov. 24	Colorado (2-10), W 37-14	9-3
13 Dec. 2	vs. Oklahoma (11-3), Big 12 Champ, L 21-7	9-4
14 Jan. 1	vs. Auburn (11-2), Cotton Bowl, L 17-14	9-5

## 2006 SEASON STATISTICS

### RUSHING

	G	No Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G	
Jackson, Brandon	14	188	1023	34	989	5.3	8	48	70.6
Lucky, Marlon	14	141	762	34	728	5.2	6	51	52.0
Glenn, Cody	9	71	375	5	370	5.2	8	36	41.1
Wilson, Kenny	12	75	354	19	335	4.5	4	30	27.9
Nunn, Terrence	14	4	21	2	19	4.8	0	18	1.4
Hardy, Frantz	13	3	16	2	14	4.7	0	13	1.1
Green, Tierre	14	1	7	0	7	7.0	0	7	0.5
Purify, Maurice	14	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1	0.1
Ganz, Joe	5	3	10	20	-10	-3.3	0	10	-2.0
Todd, Dane	14	1	0	15	-15	-15.0	0	0	-1.1
Taylor, Zac	14	60	154	186	-32	-0.5	1	24	-2.3

### PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	% Int	Yds	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Taylor, Zac	14	391	233	59.6	8	3197	26	78.228.4
Ganz, Joe	5	13	7	53.8	0	122	3	31.24.4
Purify, Maurice	14	1	1	100.0	0	28	1	28.2.0
Titchener, Dan	14	1	1	100.0	0	28	0	28.2.0
Lucky, Marlon	14	2	1	50.0	0	25	1	25.1.8
Wesch, Jake	11	1	1	100.0	0	17	1	17.1.5
TEAM	8	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0.0

### RECEIVING

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Purify, Maurice	14	34	630	18.5	7	63	45.0
Nunn, Terrence	14	42	597	14.2	3	75	42.6
Lucky, Marlon	14	32	383	12.0	0	42	27.4
Swift, Nate	14	22	374	17.0	2	49	26.7
Hardy, Frantz	13	14	317	22.6	3	78	24.4
Jackson, Brandon	14	33	313	9.5	2	49	22.4
Peterson, Todd	14	19	307	16.2	2	48	21.9
Herian, Matt	14	12	150	12.5	2	36	10.7
Erickson, Dan	13	4	85	21.2	0	57	6.5
Phillips, J.B.	14	13	82	6.3	2	10	5.9
Teafatiller, Hunter	14	5	78	15.6	4	29	5.6
Turner, Barry	14	1	29	29.0	1	29	2.1
Mueller, Josh	13	5	26	5.2	2	8	2.0
Wilson, Kenny	12	3	20	6.7	0	13	1.7
Senske, Matt	4	2	13	6.5	1	12	3.2
Todd, Dane	14	3	13	4.3	1	8	0.9

### PUNT RETURNS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Nunn, Terrence	14	18	153	8.5	0	31	10.9
Grixby, Courtney	14	13	92	7.1	0	23	6.6
Swift, Nate	14	3	50	16.7	0	33	3.6
Bradley, Stewart	14	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	-0.1

### KICKOFF RETURNS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Jackson, Brandon	14	9	157	17.4	0	27	11.2
Lucky, Marlon	14	8	153	19.1	0	32	10.9
Green, Tierre	14	3	59	19.7	0	23	4.2
Hardy, Frantz	13	3	49	16.3	0	22	3.8
Wilson, Kenny	12	2	42	21.0	0	27	3.5
Phillips, J.B.	14	1	15	15.0	0	15	1.1
Todd, Dane	14	1	13	13.0	0	13	0.9
Peterson, Todd	14	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0

### PUNTING

G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener, Dan	14	66	39.3	58	0	3	28	6	26
Congdon, Jordan	14	2	34.0	35	0	0	0	0	2

### FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Congdon, Jordan	14	7	5	40	0

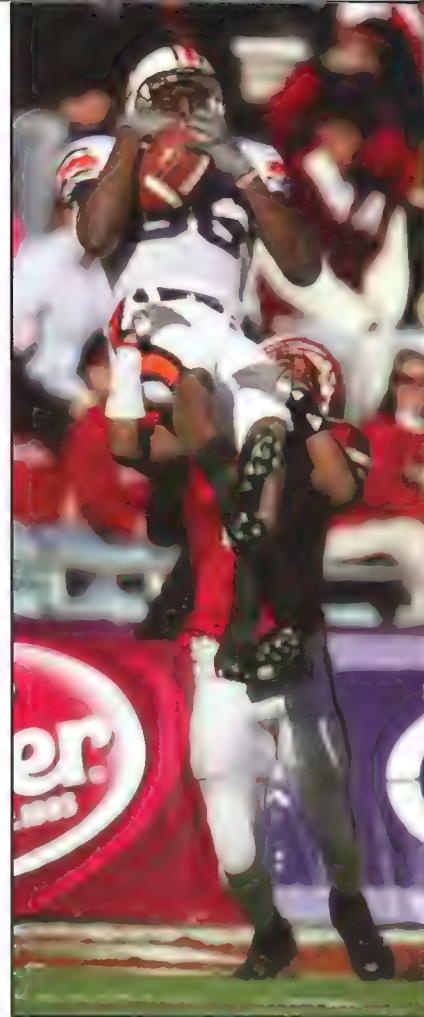
### DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Bradley, Stewart	14	41	35	76	3-18	1-6	1	3	4
Jones, Andre	14	52	22	74	1-13	1-12	7	0	0
McKeon, Corey	13	32	37	69	5-28	1-15	3	2	1
Green, Tierre	14	37	28	65	0-1	0-0	2	0	1
Ruud, Bo	14	36	29	65	4-31	2-23	4	3	2
Shanle, Andrew	14	41	16	57	0-0	0-0	7	0	1
Grixby, Courtney	14	42	11	53	1-3	0-0	11	1	1
Carriker, Adam	14	24	28	52	12-61	7-45	3	0	0
Moore, Jay	14	23	22	45	12-70	6-43	3	0	0
Brandenburg, L	14	19	22	41	3-10	0-1	0	1	0
Octavien, Steve	9	21	11	32	4-7	1-1	2	1	0
Cryer, Barry	14	18	13	31	8-38	2-18	3	1	0
Dagunduro, Ola	14	14	17	31	6-31	3-25	0	0	0
Steinkuhler, Ty	14	15	7	22	2-8	0-1	0	1	0
Suh, Ndamukong	14	12	7	19	6-45	3-37	0	1	0
Turner, Barry	14	11	7	18	1-12	1-11	2	0	1
Eisenhart, Ben	13	9	4	13	2-6	0-0	0	0	0
Culbert, Major	12	6	6	12	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Erickson, Dan	13	6	6	12	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Young, Corey	11	9	3	12	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Therense, Rickey	14	5	4	9	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
Kadavy, Andy	12	4	4	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
O'Hanlon, Matt	12	1	7	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Rigoni, Brandon	13	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Peterson, Todd	14	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dillard, Phillip	1	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wilson, Bryan	13	3	1	4	0-1	0-0	0	0	1
Potter, Zach	12	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wesch, Jake	11	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

### TEAM STATISTICS

<b>Total First Downs</b>	268	224
Rushing	119	77
Passing	136	138
Penalty	13	9
<b>Total Net Yards</b>	5574	4468
Total Plays	900	826
Yards Per Play	6.2	5.4
Yards Per Game	428.8	343.7
<b>Rushing Attempts-Yards</b>	516-2283	401-1565
Yards Per Attempt	4.4	3.9
Yards Per Game	175.6	120.4
<b>Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.</b>	384-230-7	425-228-12
<b>Passing Yards</b>	3291	2903
Yards Per Completion	14.3	12.7
Yards Per Game	253.2	223.3
<b>Punting: No.-Avg.</b>	62-39.0	77-40.0
<b>Fumbles-Lost</b>	24-16	30-11
<b>Penalties-Yards</b>	70-569	71-538
<b>Sacks By-Yds. Lost</b>	26-206	28-197
<b>Third-Down Conversions</b>	85-185	59-180
Conversion Pct.	45.9	32.8
<b>Fourth-Down Conversions</b>	14-21	9-23
Conversion Pct.	66.7	39.1
<b>Avg. Time Of Possession</b>	32:40	27:20

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
Nebraska	110	128	49	120	7	414
Opponents	38	76	43	82	0	239



Nebraska cornerback Courtney Grixby tries to keep Auburn's Courtney Taylor from making the catch.

## BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

### FINAL STANDINGS

	North Conf.		All	
	W	L	W	L
Nebraska	6	2	9	5
Missouri	4	4	8	5
Kansas State	4	4	7	6
Kansas	3	5	6	6
Colorado	2	6	2	10
Iowa State	1	7	4	8
	South			
Oklahoma	7	1	11	3
Texas	6	2	10	3
Texas A&M	5	3	9	4
Texas Tech	4	4	8	5
Oklahoma State	3	5	7	6
Baylor	3	5	4	8

### BOWL RESULTS

Thursday, Dec. 28
Independence Bowl, Shreveport, La.
Oklahoma State 34, Alabama 31
Texas Bowl, Houston, Texas
Rutgers 37, Kansas State 10
Holiday Bowl, San Diego, Calif.
California 45, Texas A&M 10
Friday, Dec. 29
Sun Bowl, El Paso, Texas
Oregon State 39, Missouri 38
Insight Bowl, Tempe, Ariz.
Texas Tech 44, Minnesota 41
Sat., Dec. 30
Alamo Bowl, San Antonio, Texas
Texas 26, Iowa 24
Monday, Jan. 1
Cotton Bowl, Dallas, Texas
Auburn 17, Nebraska 14
Fiesta Bowl, Glendale, Ariz.
Boise State 43, Oklahoma 42, ot



# Many Sources

***New NU assistant  
has picked up a lot  
along the way***

**By Terry Douglass**

**N**ew Nebraska defensive line coach Buddy Wyatt has learned so much from so many different sources along the way that it's difficult for him to pick any one individual as the inspiration for his own coaching style.

"I've been really blessed because I've had a lot of good coaches that I've had an opportunity to work with," said Wyatt, who joined Nebraska's coaching staff on Dec. 14. "I've been fortunate. I've been able to take all these things that I've learned and molded what I've liked and what has fit in with my personality and what I believe in."

If there was one standout role model for Wyatt, he said it would probably have to be the late Jim Wacker. Known for his enthusiasm and integrity, Wacker was Wyatt's coach during his college football career as a defensive lineman for Texas Christian from 1986-89, and later brought Wyatt on his staff as a graduate assistant in 1991.

"He coached me, he gave me a scholarship and he gave me my first job," Wyatt said. "More than just in terms of football, he was a good person — he was a good Christian man, and I enjoyed playing for him."

"We didn't win a whole lot of games at TCU, but it was a great time and he molded me."

The 40-year-old Wyatt also picked up several other pointers along the way during his 15-year coaching career that has included stops at seven other schools, including TCU (1991), Minnesota (1992-95), Oklahoma State (1996),

**BUDDY WYATT**  
**DEFENSIVE LINE COACH**

Northwestern (1997-98), Colorado (1999), Texas A&M (2000-02) and Alabama (2003-06).

In his last four seasons at Alabama, Wyatt was part of a defensive coaching staff that annually produced one of the country's top units. This past season, the Crimson Tide was ranked 18th in total defense — one year after finishing first in the country in scoring defense and second in total defense.

Wyatt has also developed a reputation as a solid recruiter as Alabama landed recruiting classes ranked in the top 20 nationally in each of the past three seasons. While Wyatt's recruiting focus with the Crimson Tide was the state of Florida, the native of Victoria, Texas, also has several recruiting connections in the Lone Star state.

After announcing the Wyatt would take the position vacated by John Blake, who left to join Butch Davis' staff at North Carolina, Nebraska coach Bill Callahan said that Wyatt's combination of recruiting prowess and coaching ability makes him an excellent fit for the Cornhuskers' staff.

"Coach Wyatt has a long track record of developing outstanding defensive lines at each stop in his coaching career," Callahan said. "He has familiarity with the Big 12 Conference and a proven track record as an outstanding recruiter. We are very excited to have him be a part of our football program."

In his first few weeks in Lincoln, Wyatt jumped right into the fray, taking part in helping Nebraska prepare for its appearance in the Cotton Bowl against Auburn. He said he has enjoyed getting to know his new co-workers and players so far.



Scott Brunh



"It has been good," Wyatt said. "They're good people, and they've opened their arms and accepted me and my family. It has been a quick transition, but they've made it real easy for us."

"Every person that I've met — starting with (athletic director) Steve Pederson on down — has been wonderful. Nebraska's athletics program is one of the top ones in the country, and the whole department has just been great to me."

That includes the players, Wyatt said, who have gone "out of their way" to make him feel at home in the new program. In turn, several Nebraska players said prior to the Cotton Bowl that Wyatt's friendliness and engaging personality have allowed him to quickly gain acceptance.

"You can tell he knows his stuff," senior nose tackle Ola Dagunduro said. "He's a great teacher, and he's a great guy. I wish I had another year with him to get to know him better, but he seems like he'll fit the spot very well."

Dagunduro admits that he was sad to see Blake go, but said that Wyatt seems to have some of the same coaching characteristics as Blake.

"Coach Blake will never be replaced — he's irreplaceable — and we had grown to love him, but Coach Wyatt is doing a good job," Dagunduro said. "They can both teach without making it boring. They can liven up the teaching, so they're both similar in that area."

As a coach, Wyatt said he likes to make sure that he has a very open and honest relationship with his players.

"The bottom line is that they know what I expect," Wyatt said. "As long as you let them know what your expectations are out of them, most of the time the kids will do what you ask them to."

"I think the thing about coaching is that the guys have got to respect you and they've got to trust that you are

## The Buddy Wyatt File

**Born:** Nov. 8, 1966

**Family:** Wife, Andrea; Son, Fredrick; Daughter, Ariel.

**Education:** TCU, bachelor's degree in education, 1990

**Playing Experience:** TCU, defensive line, 1986-89

**Coaching Experience:** 1991, TCU (graduate assistant/defensive line); 1992-95, Minnesota (assistant coach/defensive line); 1996, Oklahoma State (assistant coach/defensive line); 1997-98, Northwestern (assistant coach/defensive line); 1999, Colorado (assistant coach/defensive line); 2000-02, Texas A&M (assistant coach/defensive line); 2003-06, Alabama (assistant coach/defensive line).

going to help them be successful on the field and off the field."

Wyatt said he desires to have more than merely a coach-player relationship with his players.

"I like to have a friendship with the guys, so when they go on and graduate, whether they go on and play in the NFL or if they go and get a job and start raising their family, they can still come back and still be friends," Wyatt said. "Hopefully, I have a part in helping them grow as a young person."

That doesn't mean Wyatt will hesitate to get after a player when necessary.

"Coaching is coaching, and you're just trying to make the guys better," Wyatt said. "Obviously, there are times when you've got to get on them, and there are times when you've got to love 'em up . . . that's all a part of coaching."

"I feel pretty comfortable with the guys now, enough to be able to get on them if I need to." ■

**Terry Douglass** is the sports editor of the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at [terry.douglass@charter.net](mailto:terry.douglass@charter.net).



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# 'Forget the Points'

***Sadler says  
he's more  
interested in  
defensive effort***

**By Mike Babcock**

**J**amel White scored 23 points as the Cornhuskers finished nonconference play with an 82-71 victory against Western Kentucky. He was 7-for-10 from the field and 7-for-7 from the free throw line, in 31 minutes. But coach Doc Sadler didn't want to talk about White's scoring afterward.

"Forget the points," Sadler said. "I'm not even worried about the points."

White's points, anyway. Sadler was interested in the point total of Western Kentucky's Courtney Lee, who came to the Devaney Sports Center averaging 17.6 per game.

Lee managed to score 11, just two more than his turnover total of nine. And White was mainly responsible, defending the 6-foot-5, 200-pound junior from Indianapolis, Ind.

Lee was the Sun Belt Conference pre-season Player of the Year as well as being among the top 50 players included on the watch lists for the Wooden Award and Naismith Trophy.

Sadler was pleased with White's defensive effort against him.

"Jamel's got to be the player we want him to be, and he can be," Sadler said of the 6-3, 190-pound sophomore from Brooklyn, N.Y. by way of Laurinburg (N.C.) Institute.

"I'm talking about the defensive end. That's where we've got to have him."

White showed last season that he could score at the Division I level, averaging 8.7 points to earn a place on the Associated Press Big 12 all-freshman and all-reserve teams.

He scored 28 points, coming off the



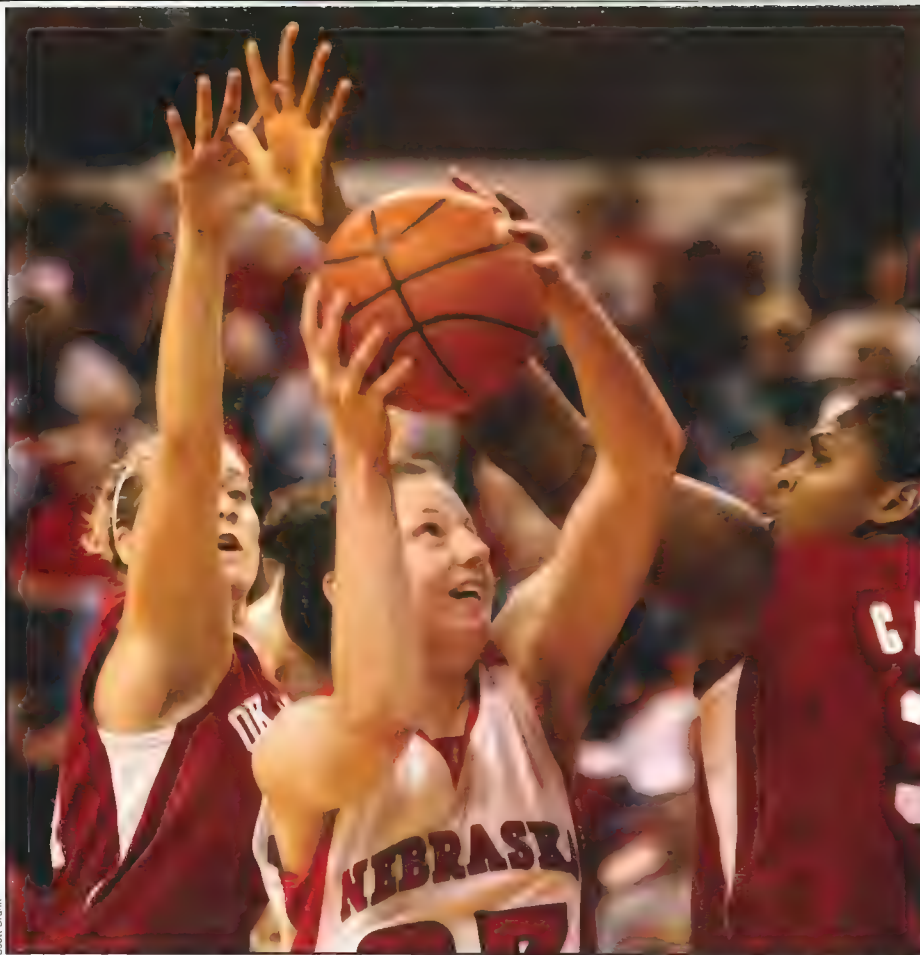
Sophomore guard Jamel White (31) scored 23 points against Western Kentucky, but coach Doc Sadler was more impressed with White's defensive effort.

bench, in a game against Missouri, and scored 22 points against Oklahoma to help the Cornhuskers

advance to the semifinals of the Big 12 Tournament.

His 287 points for the season were





Nebraska sophomore forward Kelsey Griffin scored 21 points against Texas and 22 against No. 8 Oklahoma to share Big 12 Player of the Week honors. (More women's basketball on Page 9)

## WOMEN'S SCHEDULE

Nov. 1	*Nebraska-Kearney	W 122-55
Nov. 4	*Nebraska-Omaha	W 97-59
Nov. 10	**Arizona State	L 87-60
Nov. 12	**Florida Atlantic	W 93-53
Nov. 13	**New Mexico	W 66-59
Nov. 17	Cal State Fullerton	W 76-62
Nov. 24	@UC Irvine	W 80-66
Nov. 26	@USC	W 72-65
Nov. 28	Texas-Pan American	W 77-37
Dec. 5	Minnesota	L 74-65
Dec. 9	Michigan	W 87-47
Dec. 16	Northwestern	W 73-58
Dec. 19	@Creighton	W 60-57
Dec. 21	Nicholls State	W 80-42
Dec. 28	***NC State	W 94-74
Dec. 29	***Florida	W 81-73
Jan. 3	@Texas	W 79-75
Jan. 6	Oklahoma	L 77-69
Jan. 13	@Kansas	
Jan. 17	Kansas State	
Jan. 20	@Missouri	
Jan. 24	@Texas A&M	
Jan. 27	Kansas	
Jan. 31	Iowa State	
Feb. 3	Baylor (FSN)	
Feb. 7	@Kansas State (FSN Midwest)	
Feb. 10	@Colorado (FSN)	
Feb. 14	Texas Tech	
Feb. 17	Missouri	
Feb. 20	@Iowa State FSN Midwest)	
Feb. 24	@Oklahoma State	
Feb. 27	Colorado	
Mar. 6-10	Big 12 Championship, Oklahoma City	
	*Exhibition	
	**Veterans Day Classic, Tempe, Ariz.	
	**Big 12 Tournament, Dallas, Texas	
	***State Farm Classic, Gainesville, Fla.	

the eighth-most by a freshman in school history, and his 44 3-point shots were tied for the second most all-time among Cornhusker freshmen.

Despite those credentials, White had to adjust to Sadler's system, however.

Sadler was on him from day one, White said, "just trying to get me to defend better than I did last year because in order for us to be good, our wings have got to be the best defenders on the team."

Whether or not White had a difficult time buying in, "I don't know," said Sadler. "Jamel's never fought me. I've been on Jamel, and I'm not going to let up. I just think he's got to get out of that comfort zone and decide to be as good as he can be. He's got to play hard every possession."

White was hampered by a shoulder problem (following a broken collarbone in pre-season practice) during the nonconference season. Because of that, "I was just a little bit tentative," he said.

Check that, "I was a lot hesitant," said White.

He was able to begin bench-press lifting the week of the Western

Kentucky game.

"So I'm starting to do a lot more with my shoulder now," he said.

In addition to the defense against Lee and his game-high point total, White was credited with six assists and didn't commit a turnover. Despite his youth, he showed he could take charge. "I think I'm ready to step in and be more of a leader than I was earlier in the season," he said.

He definitely can lead by example, on the defensive end.

"I've had the screws on him on offense because I've told him until he defends, I'm not going to let him play offense," Sadler said, pointing to a recent practice as evidence.

White and freshman Sek Henry "were on defense probably for an hour," he said.

"And that's the way it's going to be."

White understands what Sadler expects of him, and he's ready to respond. "I've just got to make sure I play defense in order for me to get some shots up," he said with a smile.

Does he smile in practice when Sadler reminds him of that?

"Naw," White replied, smiling again. ■

## MEN'S SCHEDULE

Nov. 6	*Nebraska-Kearney	W 74-72
Nov. 11	*SIU-Edwardsville	L 54-50
Nov. 14	Nebraska-Omaha	W 76-62
Nov. 18	Creighton	W 73-61
Nov. 21	Lubbock Christian	W 65-42
Nov. 27	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	W 71-42
Nov. 29	North Texas	W 76-57
Dec. 2	@Rutgers	L 75-73
Dec. 9	@Oregon	L 68-56
Dec. 17	Alabama A&M	W 82-55
Dec. 20	**Wyoming	W 73-58
Dec. 22	**Hawaii	L 81-72
Dec. 23	**Houston	W 70-57
Dec. 30	***Miami	W 82-67
Jan. 3	Savannah State	W 81-53
Jan. 6	Western Kentucky	W 82-71
Jan. 10	@Iowa State	L 71-62
Jan. 13	Oklahoma State (ESPN+)	
Jan. 17	@Oklahoma (FSN Midwest)	
Jan. 20	Colorado (ESPN+)	
Jan. 24	Texas (FSN Midwest)	
Jan. 27	@Kansas St. (FSN Midwest)	
Jan. 29	Kansas (ESPN)	
Feb. 3	@Missouri (ESPN+)	
Feb. 6	@Texas Tech (FSN Midwest)	
Feb. 10	Texas A&M (FSN Midwest)	
Feb. 13	Kansas State (FSN Midwest)	
Feb. 17	@Kansas (ESPN+)	
Feb. 21	@Baylor (FSN Midwest)	
Feb. 24	Missouri (ESPN+)	
Feb. 28	Iowa State	
Mar. 3	@Colorado (ESPN+)	
Mar. 8-11	Big 12 Championship, Oklahoma City	
	*Exhibition	
	**Rainbow Classic, Honolulu, Hawaii	
	***Orange Bowl Classic, Miami, Fla.	



# BASKETBALL NOTES

## SCORING FROM LONG RANGE

Freshman guard Ryan Anderson, who was slowed by a high-ankle sprain late in the nonconference season, scored 29 points in the Cornhuskers' 81-72 loss against Hawaii in the semifinals of the Rainbow Classic. His point total was the second highest by a freshman in school history.

Anderson also tied a school freshman record by hitting seven 3-point shots, in 13 attempts.

Two games later, senior guard Marcus Perry made seven 3-pointers in scoring a career-high 25 points in an 82-67 victory against Miami at the Orange Bowl Basketball Classic.

Perry's previous scoring high at Nebraska was 13 points.

### NU Freshman Single-Game Scoring

Tyrone Lue (1995-96)	30
Ryan Anderson (2006-07)	29
Jamel White (2005-06)	28
Erick Strickland (1992-93)	28
Dave Hoppen (1982-83)	27
Jerry Fort (1972-73)	27

### NU Single-Game 3-Point Shots

Cary Cochran (2001-02)	8 (13 attempts)
Marcus Perry (2006-07)	7 (12)
Ryan Anderson* (2006-07)	7 (13)
Cookie Belcher (2000-01)	7 (11)
Cary Cochran (1998-99)*	7 (9)
Chris Creswell (1991-92)	7 (10)

\*Freshman record



Ryan Anderson



Marcus Perry

## CHANGING FACES

The Cornhusker men's starting lineup was the same for the first six games, but that changed, with different starting lineups in each of the next six games. Injuries, of course, were a factor.

Even so, change hasn't necessarily been bad. "We've got a team where anybody can step up on any given night," said junior center Aleks Maric, who missed the Alabama A&M game because of a hip injury. "You've got Ryan (Anderson). You've got Jamel (White). You've got (Marcus) Perry. You've got Jay-R (Strowbridge). So, I mean, roll the dice and see what name you get."

Except for the Alabama A&M game, Maric has been a constant. He needs to be on the floor if Nebraska is to be successful in the Big 12, of course, no small accomplishment.

"When you're the only guy inside that can score . . . I want to tell you something, people can get on him or talk or whatever, but when you're getting beat like he's getting beat, it takes a toll on you," Sadler said. "Every possession he's getting attention."

And that attention increased with the start of Big 12 play. "I think all of us understand the level of play, especially early in conference, is going to be at a very, very high level," said Sadler.

Characteristically, Maric continues to take the physicality without complaint. "You play hard. You grab. You push. You shove," he said. "But that's how the game is played inside."

## HALF A HUNDRED

Cornhusker freshman guard Sek Henry scored 51 points in a game at The Patterson (N.C.) School last season. "I was hot," he said, pointing out the obvious. "I was just on fire."

"They just kept passing me the ball, and I just kept producing. I was hitting threes and jump shots, getting steals. I went between the legs and dunked like LeBron James. I was doing crazy dunk-steals. After the game, people were like, 'Are you going to the NBA?'"

Against the same team later in the season he scored "probably 21, 22. I wasn't really trying to do the same thing," he said. "They were expecting me to do a lot of the same stuff."

"But I was just trying to get everybody else involved."

Henry averaged 14 points in prep school after averaging 24 points, six assists and five rebounds to earn Best-in-the-West

recognition as a senior at Lynwood High in Los Angeles.

"I'm used to running and gunning," he said. "On this team, we run and gun, too, but we still run our offense; that's the difference. It's a new experience."

## MID-TERM DEPARTURES

The Cornhusker men's team lost two players over the holidays, both forwards, freshman forward Kris Douse and sophomore Jim Ledsome.

Douse, who was looking for an opportunity to get more playing time, departed before the team left to play Miami at the Orange Bowl Classic. The Toronto native, originally recruited by Barry Collier out of IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., averaged 8.5 minutes in eight games, scoring seven points. The Lincoln Journal Star reported that Douse likely would transfer to Delaware State.

The day after the final nonconference game against Western Kentucky, Ledsome announced he was transferring immediately so he could enroll for second semester at the University of Delaware. His home in Severna Park, Md., which is only an hour's drive from the Delaware campus.

"I talked to Coach Sadler and told him that I needed to be able to handle the intensity of playing in this league — one of the best in the country — and managing the academic side better," Ledsome said in a release through the sports information office. "I think being close to my family was one element that made this decision easier. My family is important to me, and that's what pushed this decision."

Ledsome started the final three non-conference games. He played in all 14, averaging 2.4 points and 2.5 rebounds in 10.6 minutes per game. "I am disappointed to lose Jim at this time of the season," Sadler said in a release. "But at the same time, I always want the players to do what is best for them."

## MID-TERM ENROLLEE

Jeremy Barr, a transfer from Southern California, was expected to enroll for second-semester classes at Nebraska. The 6-foot-9, 264-pound Barr would be eligible to play for the Cornhuskers in the spring of 2008. He is from the Bahamas and played high school basketball at Westbury Christian in Houston, where he earned first-team all-state recognition and was a McDonald's All-American nominee. He played in 23 games for USC last season, starting three and averaging 3.1 points and 1.5 rebounds.

Seven players have signed letters of intent with Nebraska for next season, though not all have met entrance requirements. With the departures of Ledsome and Douse and Robert Sallie's not qualifying this season, the Cornhuskers will have five available scholarships for next season.

Charles Richardson and Perry are the team's only seniors.

## FAST START

Sadler's team went 11-3 in nonconference play, the best start in recent school history. The Cornhuskers' five-game winning streak to start the season was tied for the third best all-time among first-year head coaches. Sam Waugh's 1915-16 team went 9-0, on the way to a 13-1 record.

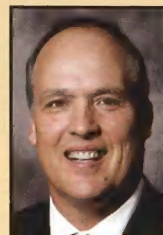
"If you'd have told me we were going to be 11-3 in pre-season, I would have told you (that) you were nuts," Sadler said after the final non-conference game against Western Kentucky.

### Recent NU Coaches' First-Season NonConference Records

Doc Sadler (2006-07)	11-3
Danny Nee (1986-87)	10-3
Barry Collier (2000-01)	7-6
Moe Iba (1980-81)	6-6
Jerry Bush (1954-55)	2-3
Joe Cipriano (1963-64)	1-6



Jeremy Barr



Doc Sadler



# 10 QUESTIONS

## with **SEK HENRY**

**6-3/180 Fr. Guard**  
**Los Angeles, Calif.**

**H**is given name is Seketoure, pronounced SEK-uh-tor-ee. His "pops" told him the name was of "a great doctor of medicine in Africa," said Henry, who goes by "Sek."

Occasionally, people will ask about his unique name. When they do, he usually offers a funny explanation. "I tell 'em it means 'the sexiest guy in Italy,'" he said with a smile.

Even the shortened version can be a problem, he said. Some people call him "Seck," and some call him "Sack." Cornhusker coach Doc Sadler is among the latter, as are his friends back home.

Sadler has called him often in this young basketball season. Henry has earned a place in the starting lineup and has seen considerable action during his first collegiate season.

A year ago, he was playing at The Patterson School, a prep school in Lenoir, N.C., where he went to get his standardized test scores raised. Sadler recruited him at Texas-El Paso.

When Nebraska hired Sadler — and Sadler brought assistant Tony Benford with him — Henry followed. He was Sadler's first recruit. "I'm happy where I'm at right now," he said.

### **What's the best thing served at the training table?**

"I love eating there, the chicken breasts. I love when they make the yams and steak. But I'd take the chicken breasts. Really, I just see it, and if it looks good, I eat it. I go by the way it looks."

### **What's one thing you would absolutely not eat?**

"Crab and seafood. Everybody's will be like, 'Let's go to Red Lobster.' I'll go, 'Oh, I'm all right.'"

### **If you could compete in any sport except basketball at the collegiate level, what would it be?**

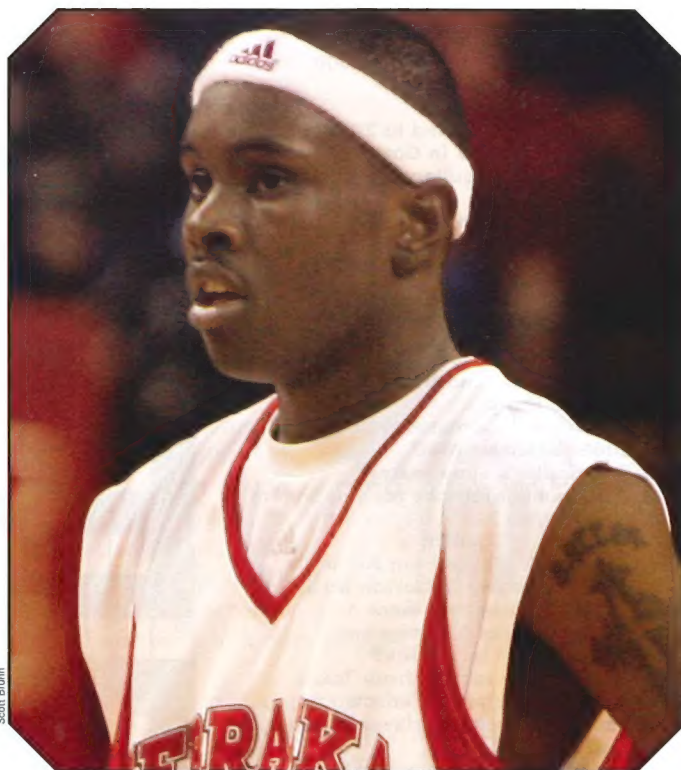
"It probably would be football. I played in junior high and Pop Warner, quarterback and wide receiver. I liked quarterback better. I liked to throw and run fake plays. When I watched that Boise State-Oklahoma game, wow, I like stuff like that. It was like a basketball maneuver that fake. It was nice."

### **What's the best movie you've seen recently?**

"I just saw 'Freedom Writers.' That was nice movie. And then the other movie, Will Smith, 'The Pursuit of Happyness.' Both were good movies."

### **Dwyane Wade or Kobe Bryant?**

"Kobe's always been my favorite player, always. He has all-around game. I know a lot of people say he hotdogs. But he tries to pass the ball. Sometimes it doesn't work out. I see Dwyane Wade and Allen Iverson, they shoot the ball just as



much as Kobe does but it's because he had all that commotion with Shaquille O'Neal. That's the only thing I see because before that commotion with Shaq, nobody ever called Kobe a hotdog. They say he's cocky. I just like him and his swagger."

### **Who have your mentors in life been?**

"My mom, my pops, they've always been there for me. My AAU coach when I was little. Even my AAU coach when I was playing high school, he helped me a lot, tried to guide me."

### **Who's the funniest guy on the team?**

"Everybody says me. They say I'm real goofy. I'm funny. But I'm trying to cool down on it now because this basketball thing is no joke. I try to do a little joke on the side, but then I get real, real focused."

### **If you could spend 30 minutes with a celebrity, in sports or otherwise, who would it be?**

"Kobe (Bryant) because I've heard he's a very, very hard worker when he practices, and I'd just like to ask him how you keep practicing, working hard all the time and motivating yourself to keep working hard and becoming better and better. I'd like to do the same drills he's doing to be the best that I can be."

### **If your life were made into a movie, who would you pick to play the part of you?**

"Play me? I don't know because I don't know anybody that's like me. I don't know anybody that can play the part of me. Man, I'm kind of weird in my own way. Even when I shoot the basketball, I shoot weird. My right hand goes to the side. When I shoot it with my left hand, I follow through with my right hand, and it crosses over like an L. It's weird. I don't know who can play me."

### **If you had a CD player and only three CDs to play on it, what three would you want?**

"It would be Snoop Dog; got to go slow, R Kelly; hip-hop, Jay-Z. I've got to go rap, and I've got to go slow, too. I listen before games, rap, hip-hop, like Snoop Dog or sometimes I go slow. But sometimes I don't want to listen to slow music right before a game. I can't really do that. I've got to get an attitude." ■



# CROSSWORD

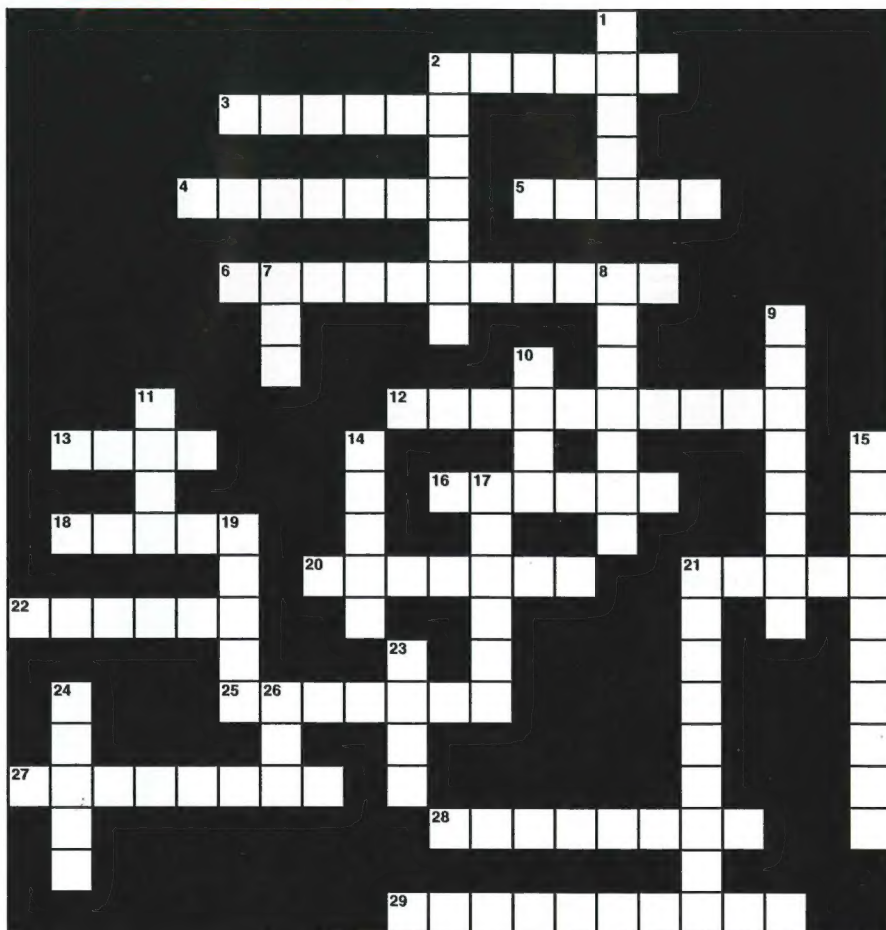
## ACROSS

- 2 Cornerback who missed 2006 season
- 3 2006 offensive MVP
- 4 Linebacker sidelined in 2006
- 5 Leading receiver in Cotton Bowl
- 6 Bill Callahan's college position
- 12 April 14 event
- 13 Volleyball coach
- 16 Recruiting coordinator
- 18 Scored first touchdown in Cotton Bowl
- 20 Scored last touchdown in Cotton Bowl
- 21 Special teams coordinator
- 22 Quarterback who transferred from Arizona State
- 25 Jay Moore's hometown
- 27 2006 defensive MVP
- 28 Doc Sadler's alma mater
- 29 2007 nonconference road opponent

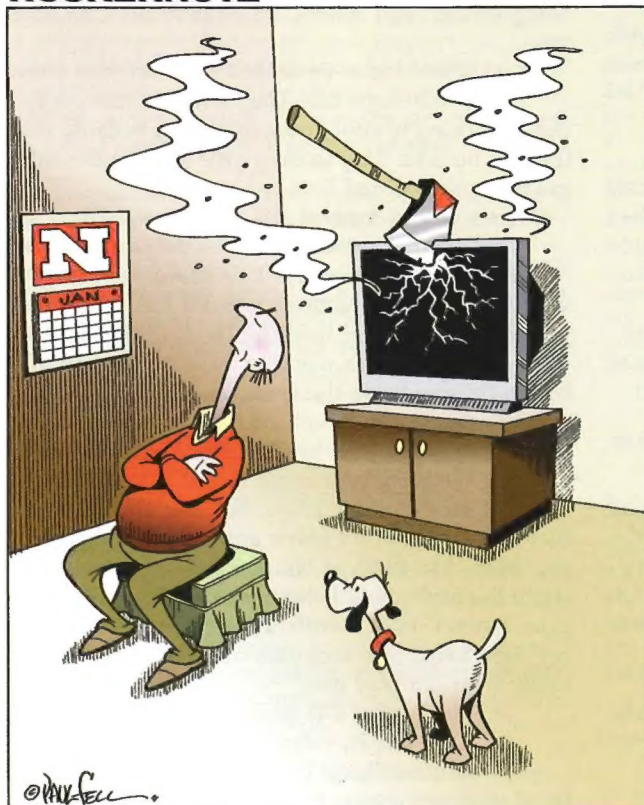
## DOWN

- 1 Basketball player from Australia
- 2 Leading tackler in Cotton Bowl
- 7 Sept. 15 home opponent
- 8 Kicker leaving NU program
- 9 2006 special teams MVP
- 10 Quarterback recruit from Texas
- 11 Women's basketball coach
- 14 Volleyball national player of the year
- 15 Adam Carriker's home state
- 17 2006 Tom Novak trophy winner
- 19 Number of NU volleyball national titles
- 21 Sept. 22 home opponent
- 23 Two-time academic All-American
- 24 New defensive line coach
- 26 Junior college quarterback recruit

Answers in March issue



## HUSKERNUTZ



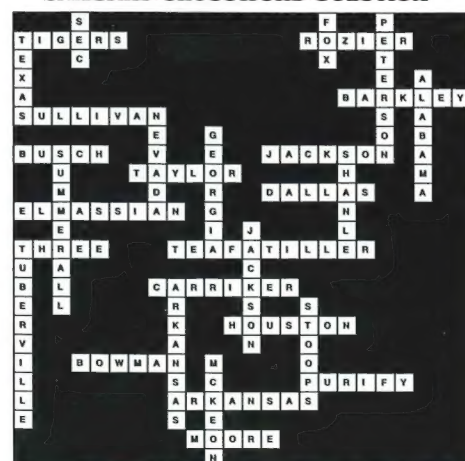
FOLLOWING THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE BOWL GAME, ALGONQUIN SWEARS TO HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH NEBRASKA FOOTBALL. AT LEAST UNTIL LETTER-OF-INTENT SIGNING DAY.

## IDEAS?

DO YOU HAVE SOME INSPIRATION FOR A HUSKERNUTZ CARTOON? IF WE USE YOUR IDEA, WE'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT AND SEND YOU AN AUTOGRAPHED FULL-COLOR PRINT OF YOUR HUSKERNUTZ CARTOON!

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## JANUARY CROSSWORD SOLUTION





## Closing The Gap?

*Callahan says Huskers 'still have a ways to go,'  
but 'I just think we're getting there'*



**Mike  
BABCOCK**

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 9-5 and 10-4 is significant from a perception standpoint. With a victory in the Cotton Bowl, and a 10-4 record, Nebraska would have finished with a Top-20 ranking, something it hasn't had since mid-November of 2003, prior to a 38-9 loss against Kansas State at home.

The Cornhuskers, who were 8-2 and ranked No. 18 that week, have been in the Associated Press Top 20 only three weeks since, all this past season. They were No. 19 the week of the Southern California loss, No. 17 the week of the Texas loss and No. 19 the week of the Oklahoma loss.

They were in the Top 25 all but two weeks of the season, however, before dropping out of the final AP poll. They finished at No. 27, with about half as many votes as No. 26 Hawaii.

They were the highest-ranked five-loss team, whatever consolation there is in that.

A year ago, Nebraska rode a season-ending, three-game winning streak to a No. 24 ranking. Based on that, the program took a small step back — again from a perception standpoint. But "I don't think it sets our program back at all," quarterback Zac Taylor said of the Cotton Bowl loss.

"I think we're headed in the right direction. We've got a lot of great young players. We'll be back next year, and I know all three of us will be excited to see what those guys can do next year."

"All three of us" included fellow seniors Stewart Bradley and Adam Carriker.

"I think this will drive the guys in the off-season to work even harder," said Bradley.

Carriker agreed, echoing Taylor. "Obviously, it would have been nice to win, to beat a Top-10 team," he said. "We definitely closed the gap this year against a lot of Top 10s. I think, like he (Bradley) said, it will just drive the guys to lift harder, run faster, just get better, get more ready for next year."

The Auburn loss was no disgrace, certainly. The Tigers, who finished 11-2 and ranked No. 9, handed national champion Florida its only loss, 27-17 at Auburn in mid-October.

Auburn rallied from a 17-11 deficit, shutting out the Gators in the second half.

Oh yes, and the Tigers gained 315 yards against Florida's defense.

Though comparing a regular-season conference game to an inter-sectional bowl game has limited value, Nebraska's effort against Auburn is reason for optimism.

"We still have a ways to go; we said that as we came in here," coach Bill Callahan said after the Cotton Bowl game. "We weren't ready to be a Top 10 team just yet. But this competitive schedule that we have played has really helped our team to a huge degree. I just think we're getting better.

"We have closed the gap on a lot of people."

Though patience is hardly the order of the day anywhere — Exhibit A: now-former Alabama coach Mike Shula — Callahan has had only three years to implement his program.

The changes, of course, have been dramatic. And Callahan has changed as well.

"I knew it was going to be tough coming in, just from the mere knowledge of knowing what goes into what we wanted to get done," he said during a reflective interview the week of the Big 12 championship game. "To change that was going to be pretty complex, to flip everything kids were learning in one dimension and turn it over into the other. There was a little carryover, but not much."

He has changed not only the system but also personnel. "I think the profile was different, a different type of player we were looking for," he said. "I think we're getting there. I don't think we're there yet, I really don't. We're making strides to getting more players that fit what we want to get done."

Asked about the pressure of impatience and expectations, Callahan said, "I think coaches, by and large, understand the dynamics of change. They have a full appreciation of what goes on during a transition. So you try to insulate yourself, just try to stay focused on what you've got to get done, bite your lip and go to work. What else are you going to do? You're not going to change anything."

Nebraska was 9-3 at that point, with a chance to win the Big 12 title and earn a BCS bowl bid, opposite Boise State, which would stun Oklahoma to finish 13-0 and ranked No. 5.

The two losses after that changed the perception of the 2006 Cornhuskers, but not the reality. "I've got a lot of confidence in this team as it grows and matures going into next season," Callahan said. "I'm awfully confident that we'll get better and we'll break through at some point.

"There's no question in my mind about that. We're getting there, and it won't be long." ■



**Zac Taylor says the  
Huskers are headed in  
the right direction.**